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East Berlin

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William the Conqueror **WAR CRIMINAL?**

The brutal story
of the Harrying
of the North

**How the
Falklands
War fired
up Britain**

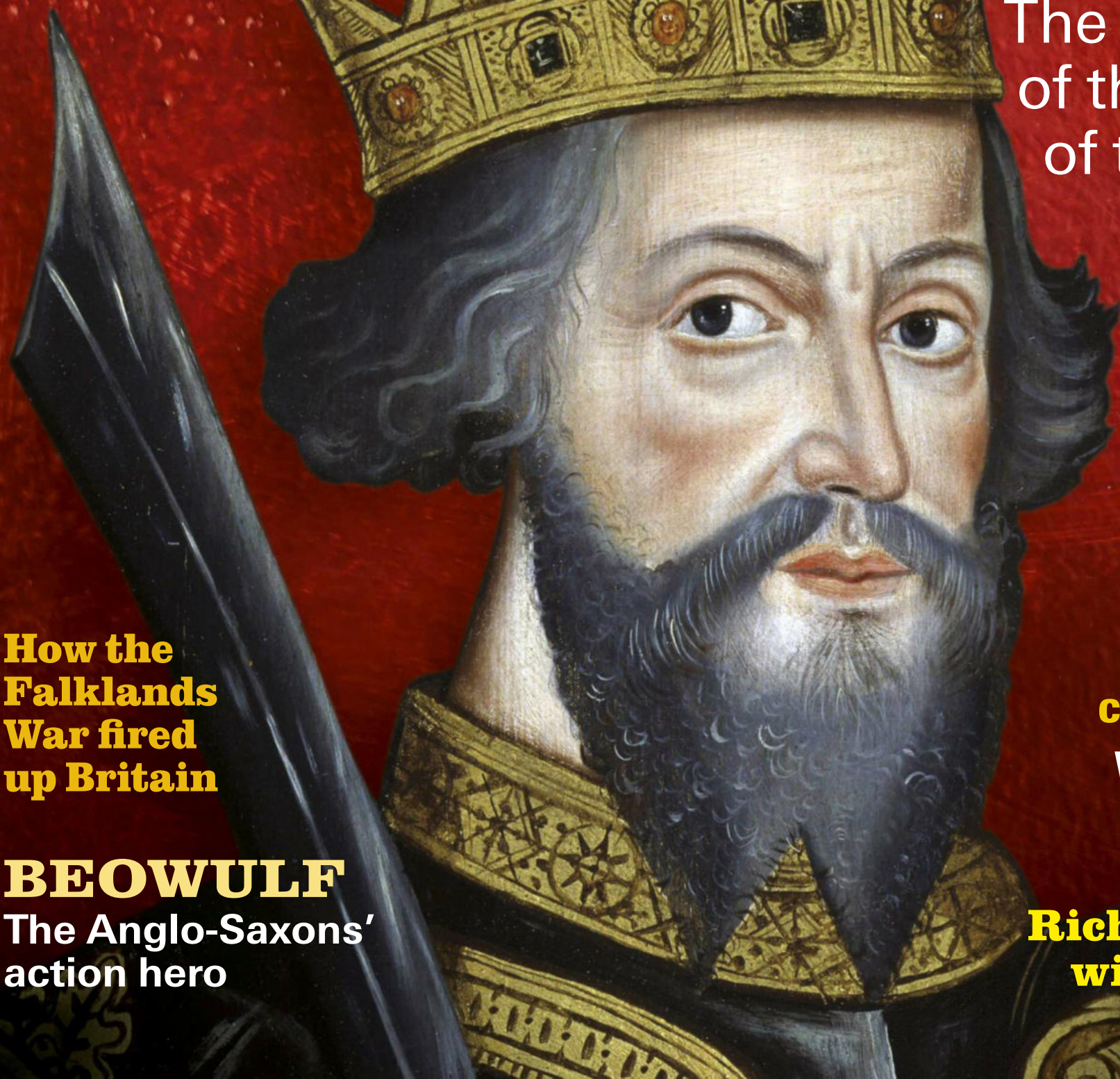
BEOWULF

The Anglo-Saxons'
action hero

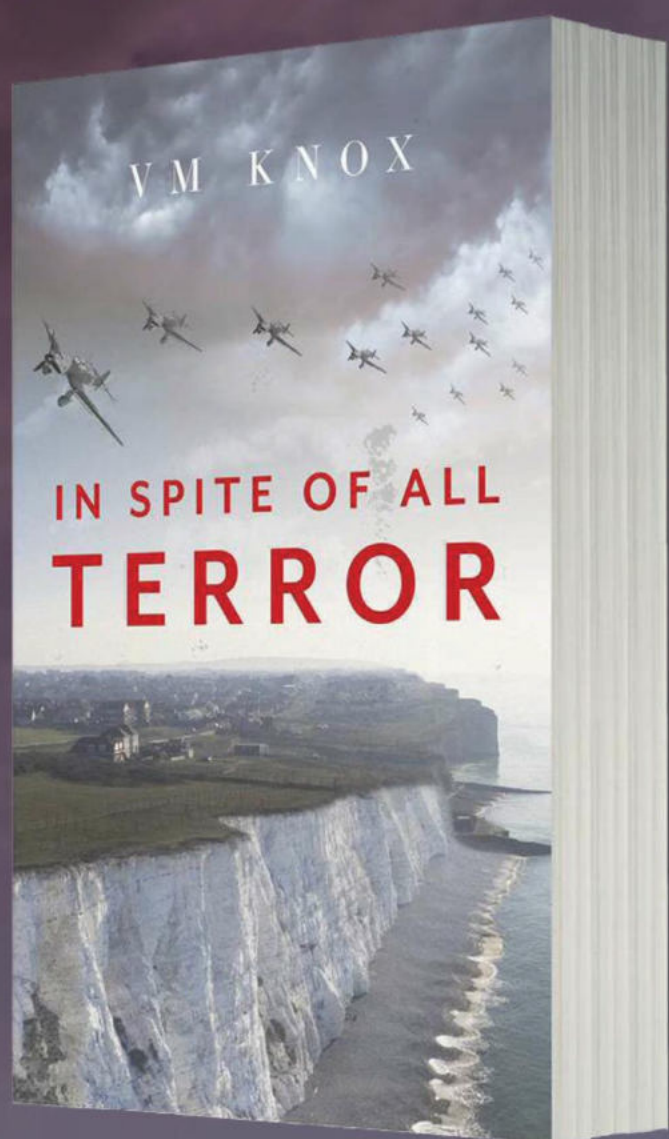
**"This was a
corporation that
could topple kings"**

William Dalrymple on the
East India Company

**Richard III's battle
with his brothers**

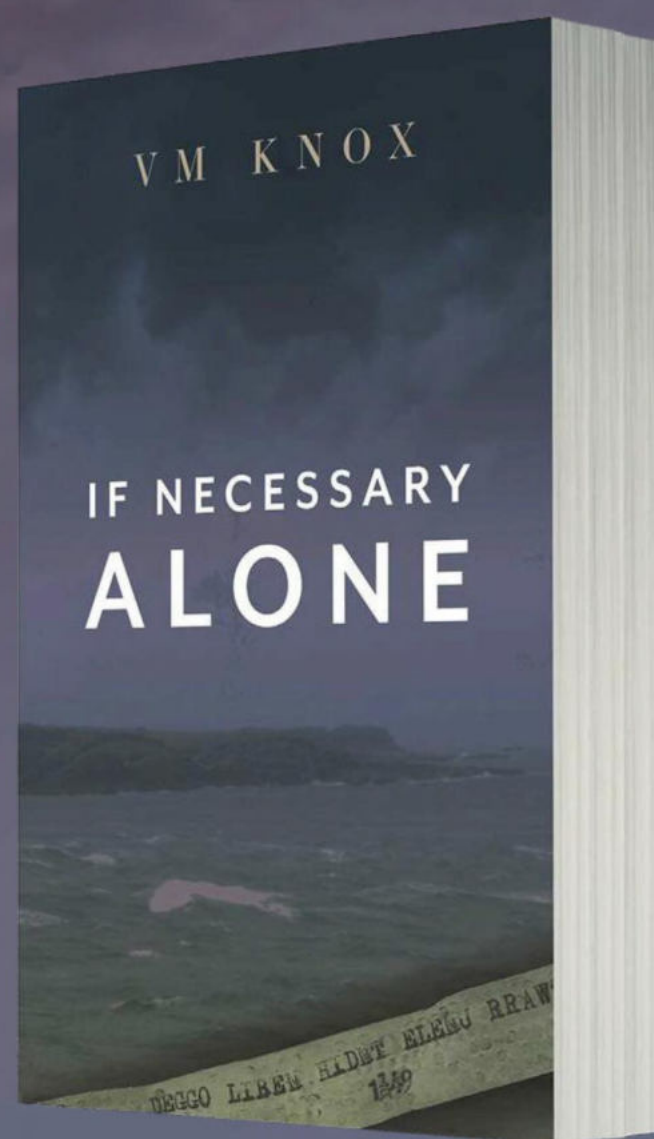


Deception, Conspiracy, Murder and Embedded Nazi Spies



In Spite of All Terror is the first in a series of crime thrillers by V M Knox that mix historical fact, crime fiction and superb characterisations. Set in September 1940, when Britain stood alone against an imminent Nazi invasion, Reverend Clement Wisdom and other men from the restricted occupations, were called to join the covert Auxiliary Units. Based in East Sussex, these ordinary men by day will become saboteurs and assassins by night. Following the murders of several of Clement's team, he finds himself embroiled in the murky world of espionage where things are never what they seem.

"Fantastic read, kept me enthralled to the last page."
Janet Laurence, Former Chair, British Crime Writers' Association.



If Necessary, Alone is the second thriller in the series. Clement Wisdom, now a Major in Special Duties Branch, Secret Intelligence Service, is sent to remote Caithness to investigate illicit encrypted radio transmissions. But as soon as he arrives there, an out-station wireless operator is found brutally murdered and Clement becomes entangled in a web of death and silence. Alone, and in the bitter Scottish winter, Clement must stay one step ahead of a killer if he is to remain alive.

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independent book shops and Waterstones.**

WELCOME

NOVEMBER 2019

“ On 14 October 1066 William of Normandy defeated King Harold in what is surely the most famous battle in English history. Yet the **Norman conquest did not end at Hastings**, as resistance continued across the country for several years to come. In 1069, the darkest chapter of this story began as William initiated a brutal policy of suppression in the north of England, leading to tens of thousands of deaths. On the 950th anniversary of the **Harrying of the North**, Marc Morris revisits this horrific episode and considers whether it constitutes an act of genocide. You'll find his piece on page 22.

This issue is being published at a crucial time in the Brexit process and although it seems foolhardy to predict what will happen next, it is clear that Britain is now deeply polarised. Of course this is not the first time the country has faced serious divisions and so we thought it would be an interesting moment to explore the events of 1660 when **Charles II sought to reunite his realm** following the fissures of the Civil War. Kate Loveman takes up that story on page 43.

In a few weeks' time our **History Weekend events will be taking place in Chester and Winchester**. There are still tickets available for some talks; if you've not yet booked yours, go to page 80 for more details. The magazine's editorial team will be attending in force and, as always, we look forward to seeing many of you there.

Rob Attar
Editor



THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



Helena Merriman

Thirty years ago the Berlin Wall came down. I've been uncovering one of its greatest escape stories: interviewing people in Berlin, crawling through tunnels and burrowing into the Stasi archives. **Helena chronicles a remarkable bid to escape East Berlin on page 28**



Kate Loveman

The events leading up to the Restoration struck observers as scarcely believable. Diarists of the time were alarmed and excited by the political chaos they witnessed. **Kate chronicles Charles II's attempts to reunite his realm after the Civil War on page 43**



William Dalrymple

Here, for the first time in world history, you see something that we're familiar with today: corporations' potential for sheer heartlessness. **William talks about his new book on the East India Company on page 68**

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BBC History Magazine, PO Box 3320, 3 Queensbridge, Northampton, NN4 7BF. Basic annual subscription rates: UK: £48, Eire/Europe: £67, ROW: £69
Editorial *BBC History Magazine*, Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited, Eagle House, Colston Avenue, Bristol BS1 4ST

In the **US/Canada** you can contact us at:
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CONTENTS

NOVEMBER 2019

FEATURES

22 The brutal Conqueror

Marc Morris asks if William I's infamous Harrying of the North should be labelled a genocide

28 Escape from East Berlin

Helena Merriman describes an audacious bid to tunnel beneath the Berlin Wall to freedom in the west

37 The power of Beowulf

Eleanor Parker answers the key questions on the Anglo-Saxon epic that inspired *The Lord of the Rings*

43 Reuniting Britain

Kate Loveman chronicles Charles II's attempts to heal a divided nation in the wake of the Civil War

50 Brothers at war

Thomas Penn on the bitter disputes between Edward IV, George, Duke of Clarence and the future Richard III

61 Falklands feelgood factor

Victory in the South Atlantic in 1982 gave Britons a huge psychological boost, argues Dominic Sandbrook

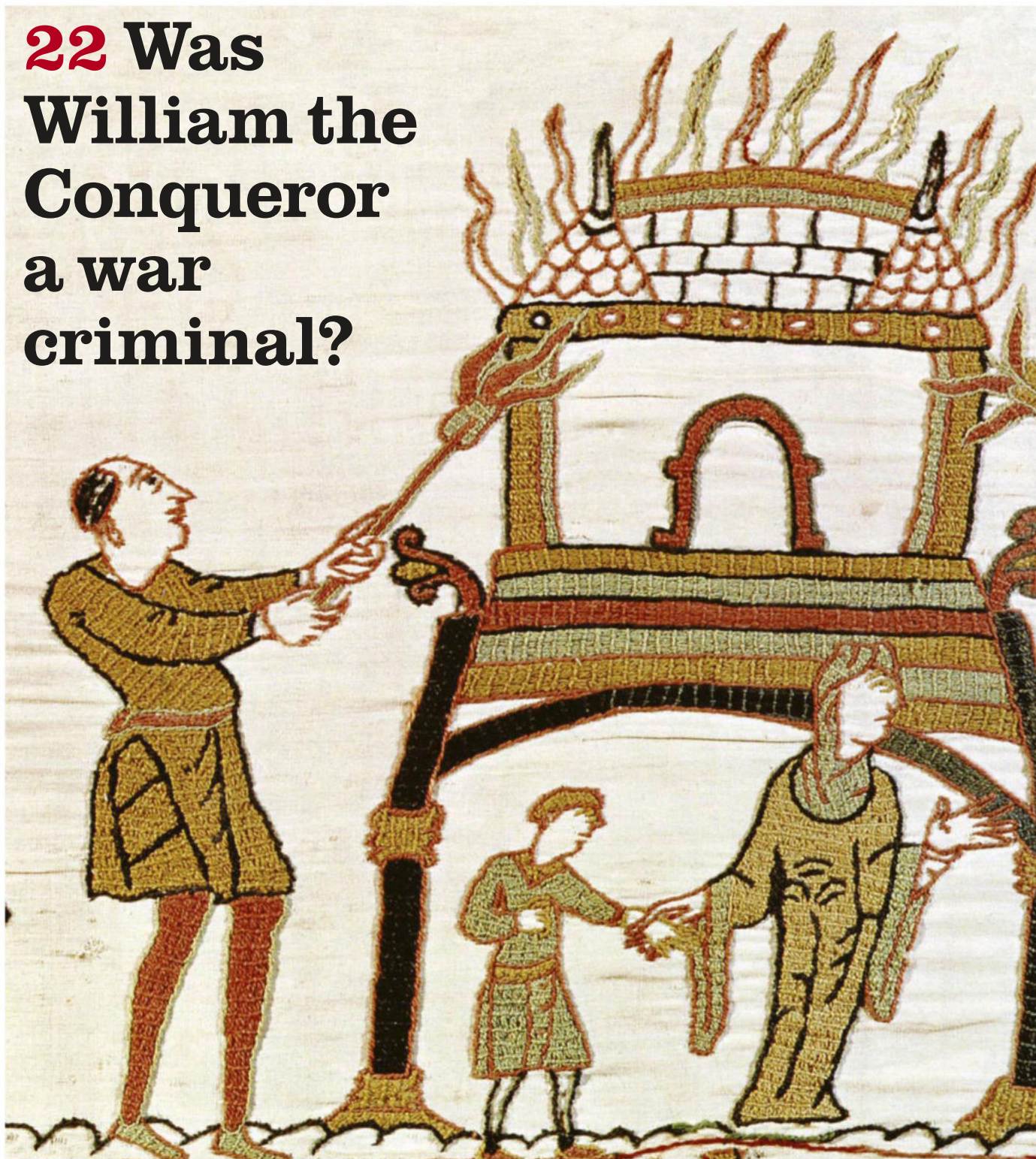


Well-wishers watch HMS *Hermes* depart Portsmouth for the Falkland Islands, 5 April 1982



50 The sibling rivalry that rocked England during the Wars of the Roses

22 Was William the Conqueror a war criminal?



PA IMAGES/ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES/PHILIP MOULD & COMPANY



37 What the epic poem *Beowulf* tells us about the **Anglo-Saxons**



ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES/ROBERT HARDING

28 The most intrepid bids to get over (and under) **the Berlin Wall**



43 How Charles II put Britain back together **after the Civil War**



88 Explore a hub of **England's medieval cloth trade**

EVERY MONTH

This month in history

- 7 **History news**
- 10 **Behind the news:**
Britain's drug laws
- 13 **Michael Wood** on
Anglo-Saxon treasures
- 14 **Anniversaries**
- 19 **David Olusoga's**
Hidden Histories

20 Letters

Books

- 68 **Interview:** William Dalrymple
on the East India Company
- 72 New history **books reviewed**

Encounters

- 82 **Diary:** What to see and do
this month
- 88 **Explore:** Lavenham, Suffolk
- 95 **Prize crossword**
- 98 **My history hero**
Peter Tatchell chooses
Tom Wintringham

80 History Weekends 2019

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VOYAGE TO THE PAST

Princess Cruises first set sail in 1965, bound for Mexico, a land of beautiful beaches, exotic wildlife and ruined temples that stand as a striking reminder of past civilisations. Since then, Princess Cruises has been making its own history, sailing thousands of people to fascinating ancient sites all over the world. Which of these five places steeped in history are on your list to visit?

ROME

The eternal city will always hold an attraction for historians. As you walk in the footsteps of the Romans, you can almost hear them marching to the Forum, see them standing guard at the magnificent Pantheon or keeping order at the Colosseum – where amusement was a boisterous affair. Entertainment back onboard is of a gentler, but no less thrilling nature. You can try your luck in the casino, let yourself be entertained at the theatre or enjoy a refreshing cocktail at one of the many bars.

TOKYO

Built in the early 7th-century, Sensoji, the ancient Buddhist temple in Asakusa, is a colourful, magnificent sight to behold. For a taste of more recent history, climb to the top of the imposing red and white Tokyo Tower. Built in 1958, it offers panoramic views of the city. Put a visit to these on your to-do list, along with sampling your Princess ship's handmade sushi, grabbing a nibble at the noodle bar or taking to the stage for a spot of karaoke.

ATHENS

Standing proud atop the Acropolis, the serene Parthenon looks down on the commotion of the modern city of Athens. It's a breathtaking reminder of the incredible architectural achievements of 5th-century BC civilisation. Ancient Olympia, home of the Olympic games, is also not to be missed – along with the fascinating speakers onboard, keen to share their knowledge of the history and culture of Greece, even before you reach your next port.

GO BACK IN TIME WITH PRINCESS
CRUISES AND EXPERIENCE
HISTORY WHERE IT HAPPENED



CANCUN

With live mariachi bands, tequila tastings and Mexican-themed cuisine onboard, Princess Cruises make it easy for you to get a taste of the rich heritage and vibrant culture of Mexico before you even get there. But to really understand this fascinating place, you need to visit one of its many Aztec and Mayan ruins. Chichen Itza, a UNESCO World Heritage site founded in the 6th century, is one of the best – and a magnificent example of an ancient civilisation.

PANAMA

Set on the isthmus that links Central and South America, this fascinating city is full of archaeological ruins, churches and monuments that tell stories of its past. But none beat the Panama Canal which was 400-years in the making, with builders carving their way through 51 miles of jungle and granite. Once you've tackled that, see if you can navigate your way around the Princess Links putting course.



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EYE-OPENER

A charming discovery

A treasure trove of amulets and charms buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79 has been publicly revealed for the first time. Discovered inside a wooden box during recent excavations at Pompeii, the artefacts – made from materials such as bone, amber and glass – were possibly used in rituals to aid fertility and provide their female wearer with good luck. Although the items were found at the home of a wealthy resident, experts believe they belonged to a servant rather than the villa's owners. The cache will now go on display at Pompeii's Palestra Grande, along with other new discoveries.

TALKING POINTS

A novel conversation



With Brexit dominating the conversation on social media, a debate among historians regarding medieval fiction was a pleasant diversion. **ANNA WHITELOCK** reveals more

Discussions among historians on Twitter have become intensely political in recent weeks, with those on either side of the Brexit divide searching for past analogies for current affairs.

It was therefore a welcome relief when a question tweeted by the **University of Sussex Centre for Early Modern and Medieval Studies** (@SussexCEMMS) led to an entirely different debate: "What is the most accomplished piece of historical fiction set in the medieval or early modern period: [the works of] Hilary Mantel, Ken Follett, Philippa Gregory, or perhaps someone else?"

For possibly the first time on Twitter all month, there was immediate agreement, with **John Gallagher** (@earlymodernjohn) asking: "What about Ali Smith's *How to Be Both*?" **Mark Williams** (@ExileonWainSt) strongly agreed – also helpfully putting forward the Italian Renaissance novels of Sarah Dunant.

But the warm words weren't to last, with **James Alexander Cameron** (@DrJACameron) insisting: "Ken Follett is an atrocious author who just writes soap opera garbage," before pouring scorn on his *Kingsbridge* series. **Charlotte Potter** (@dasLeser-attchen) pushed back, saying she was prepared to "stick up" for Follett.

Of course, historians always like to clarify the terms of the debate. **Peter Kirwan** (@DrPeteKirwan) tweeted to say: "Depends what you mean by 'accomplished', but Dorothy Dunnett's *King Hereafter* is probably the most meticulously researched (and generally fabulous) historical novel I've read."

Medieval Medicine (@WinstonEBlack) also pondered the wording of the question: "I have to wonder what 'accomplished' means – accurate, engaging, stimulating toward further research?" Thankfully, @SussexCEMMS was able to provide clarification: "I think I meant accuracy, but overridingly, something that is just a damn good read!"

It didn't take long for politics to return to the table, though. **Madeline Odent** (@oldenoughtosay) assumed that an innocent nod from **John Jenkins** (@Armentarius) for Hilda Prescott's *The Man on a Donkey* – a novel about the upheaval following Henry VIII's break with Rome – was a comment on the state of parliament. A subtle indication, perhaps, of the extent to which Brexit is continuing to dominate discussions between historians on social media. **H**



Join the debate at twitter.com/historyextra



Peasants' Revolt leader Wat Tyler meets his end in an illustration from Jean Froissart's *Chronicles*

MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

Project to reveal revolt 'from below'

The Peasants' Revolt is set to be the focus of a major new academic study based at the University of Reading. Led by Professor Adrian Bell from the university's Henley Business School, 'The People of 1381' project will explore the wider economic, social and political context of the uprising, when rebels embarked on violent protests calling for lower taxation and an end to serfdom.

Using primary sources such as manorial documents and judicial records, researchers will create a comprehensive database containing details of the events, places and people connected to the revolt.

The team will construct detailed biographies not only of key rebels like Wat Tyler, but also of ordinary people whose voices have largely been absent from previous studies, including household servants, soldiers and women.

Once complete, the findings will be used in a new travelling exhibition that will tour locations linked to the uprising, and will also help create educational material for schools.

"Bringing together the records of the revolt offers a remarkable opportunity to explore the lives, aspirations and frustrations of those usually hidden from view, giving us insight into the motives and actions of the crowd rather than the elite," said Professor Bell.

"We believe the project can help foster a modern sense of community and engagement with the past, and the exhibition and education opportunities it brings will help encourage this."

The People of 1381 – which is supported by a grant of nearly £1m from the Arts and Humanities Research Council – is set to run for three years. Academics from the universities of Southampton, Oxford and Glasgow will also work on the project. **H**

// For possibly the first time on Twitter all month, there was immediate agreement //

Twitter users debated the merits of works of historical fiction by authors such as Hilary Mantel



Anna Whitelock is head of history at Royal Holloway, University of London



A GOOD MONTH FOR...

JOSEPH MERRICK

Leicester residents are raising money to fund a memorial statue of Joseph Merrick, the 'Elephant Man', born in the city in 1862. Merrick, who found fame in Victorian Britain due to his physical deformities, earned a living as a freak-show exhibit before dying in London aged 27.

TINTAGEL CASTLE

A £4m footbridge connecting the two separated halves of Tintagel Castle has opened to the public. Spanning 229ft, the structure replicates a natural land bridge that collapsed between the 14th and 17th centuries. The Cornwall landmark is renowned for its links to the Arthurian legend.

A BAD MONTH FOR...



HADRIAN'S WALL

Northumbria Police is patrolling Hadrian's Wall in a bid to deter metal detectorists from illegally hunting for Roman treasures. Historic England confirmed that 'nighthawks' have been "stealing parts of this internationally important historical site".

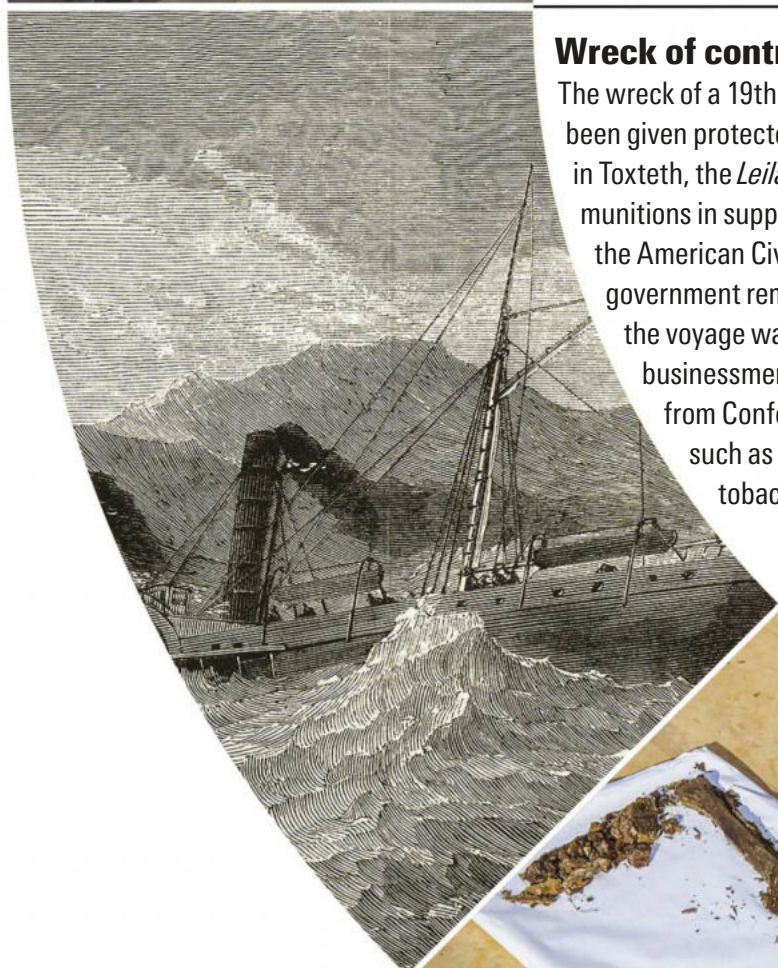
HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of the stories hitting the **history** headlines



IWM reveals WW2 plans

Imperial War Museums (IWM) has unveiled plans for a new series of galleries exploring the Holocaust and Second World War. Due to be completed in 2021, the proposed exhibition spaces at IWM's flagship museum in Lambeth will span two floors and incorporate a 'digital learning suite'. The £30.5m initiative marks the second phase of a transformation project that began with a revamp of the First World War galleries and atrium in 2014.



Wreck of controversial ship receives protection

The wreck of a 19th-century steamship in Liverpool Bay has been given protected status by Historic England. Built in Toxteth, the *Leila* sank in 1865 while transporting munitions in support of the Confederacy during the American Civil War. Despite the British government remaining officially neutral, the voyage was backed by UK businessmen seeking to profit from Confederate goods such as cotton and tobacco.

Body could be lost general

A one-legged skeleton found buried in the Russian city of Smolensk could be that of Napoleon's favourite general. Experts hope that tests will prove the remains belong to Charles-Étienne Gudin, who died during the French invasion of Russia in 1812. Gudin lost a leg after being hit by a cannonball, and succumbed to gangrene three days later.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:

The Gilbert Scott Building at the University of Glasgow, built on an estate that once belonged to slave owner Robert Bogle; an artist's impression of new galleries planned for IWM London; an illustration depicting the sinking of *Leila* in 1865; skeleton thought to be that of Charles-Étienne Gudin (1768–1812)

The cannabis conundrum

With a group of MPs predicting that cannabis will be legalised during the coming decade, **VIRGINIA BERRIDGE** traces the social forces and geopolitical rivalries that have shaped UK drugs policy over the past 150 years

As interest in cannabis's medicinal properties has grown, so has the number of newspaper headlines that it's generated. With the drug increasingly being used in the treatment of conditions as diverse as multiple sclerosis and intractable epilepsy, campaigners are now calling – with ever more urgency – for its medicinal benefits to be exploited further still. As recently as July, a cross-party group of MPs predicted that the UK will fully legalise cannabis use within 5 to 10 years.

Their predictions may or may not be realised. But the fact is, for almost five decades, the Misuse of Drugs Act has applied stringent restrictions to cannabis's medicinal application. And that act is just one part of a panoply of legislation that has regulated the use of 'dangerous drugs' in Britain. Why was this legislation introduced? Who does it serve? What is it for?

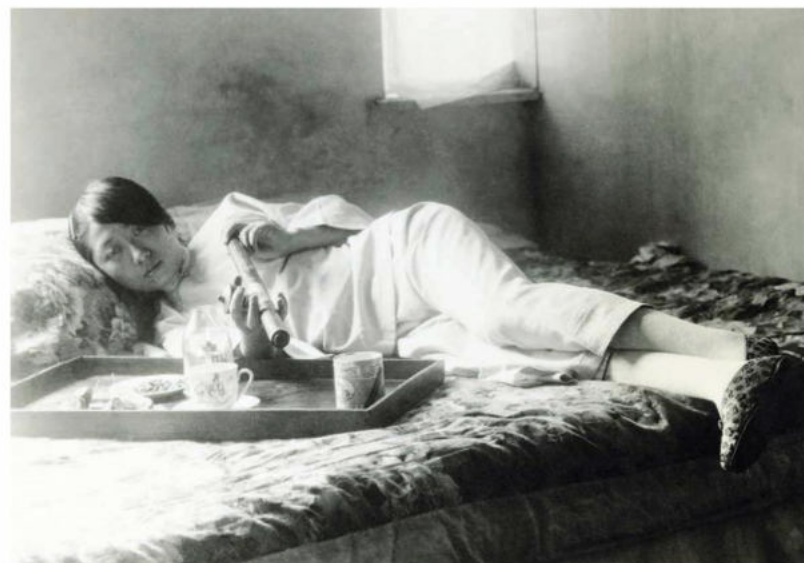
These laws, which have been in existence in one form or other for more than a century, have undoubtedly aimed to protect the public and to deal with the health problems caused by unrestricted drug use. But if the past 100 years has proved anything, it's that drug laws have never been about the use of drugs alone. From the interests of the domestic pharmacist profession to geopolitical rivalries, there have always been other interests in play.

This was certainly the case with the very first drugs regulation: the Pharmacy Act of 1868. Before 1868, drugs such as opium had been sold through a multiplicity of outlets. The act changed the landscape by giving sole control of the sale of opiates above a certain strength to the newly emergent pharmacist profession. This was a public health measure – quality was uncertain and overdoses and accidental deaths commonplace. But it was also one that

gave pharmacists the authority they needed for professionalisation.

Pharmacy-based drug control was a purely domestic measure. But, soon, Britain's drug-law policy was increasingly being shaped by events beyond its borders.

One of the first examples of this phenomenon was seen in the late 19th century, when the United States – aiming to extend its strategic influence in the far east, and pressurised by American missionaries in



Trade in misery A Chinese woman smokes opium. In the late 19th century, the US agitated to end the India-Chinese opium trade



Calls for change A pro-marijuana protester photographed outside parliament as MPs debate its medicinal use, July 2018

China – agitated to end the India-Chinese opium trade. This was a sign of things to come and, by the end of the First World War, the issue of drugs control had taken on a truly global dimension.

One little-noticed aspect of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, the peace treaty that ended the First World War, was the introduction of an international framework for the control of drugs, meaning nations such as Germany, a major manufacturer of cocaine, no longer had the power to veto moves to control the drug. Bodies like the International Narcotics Control Board, which dates to just after the First World War, are still operative today.

Geopolitics has had a huge influence on drugs policy throughout the 20th century – and has shaped global attitudes towards cannabis. When British delegates took

// After the Second World War, cannabis became popular among a younger, more hedonistic cohort of users //



Home grown

A man inspects a cannabis plant, grown for medicinal purposes, in Sittingbourne, Kent. Britain is the world's biggest producer of cannabis for scientific purposes but domestic laws have restricted its medicinal use in the UK

their seats at an international opium conference in Geneva in 1925, cannabis caused few problems back home in the UK. But the Egyptian delegation was determined to use the drug to embarrass its former colonial rulers, and pointed out that, when Egypt had been swamped with smuggled cannabis under British rule, the authorities had done little to address the problems. The subsequent decision to control the drug globally was therefore partly motivated by colonial interests.

'Parked' on methadone

Cannabis use began to rise in Britain in the wake of the Second World War, becoming popular among a younger, more hedonistic (though still small) cohort of users. The 1971 Misuse of Drugs Act spoke of "controlled drugs", rather than dangerous ones, and separated them into three categories: Classes A, B and C. Class A drugs included heroin and cocaine; cannabis was placed in class B; while Class C contained some amphetamines and benzodiazepines. This period also witnessed the establishment of a specialist hospital-based treatment system run by consultant psychiatrists (replacing GPs as the primary interface with drug users).

Drugs treatment has changed radically since then. At first, abstinence sat atop psychiatrists' agenda, but that was then superseded by a renewed emphasis on harm reduction – and, in the wake of the emergence of HIV/Aids, maintenance with the opiate-substitute drug, methadone. Now, 40 years on, the focus has reverted to 'recovery' and abstinence. This has, in part, been politically driven, but is also informed by a desire not to leave users 'parked' on methadone.

Policymakers' attitudes to cannabis use have evolved too. Internationally, many countries have moved towards less punitive and more health-focused approaches. A 'zone of pragmatism' emerged in the EU, while the establishment of licit markets for cannabis in Uruguay and Canada, and the extension of marijuana reforms in US states, have challenged long-established United Nations conventions on drugs control.

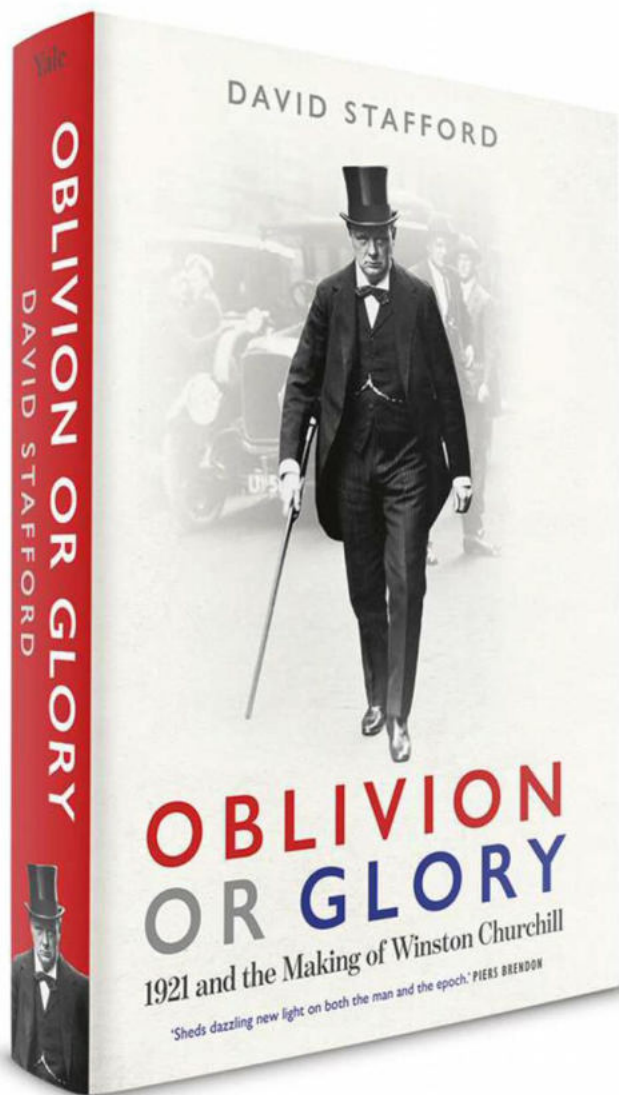
Nations are now broadly split into three groups over drug control policy: those who support the status quo, such as China, Russia, much of east Asia and the Middle East; moderate reformers, among them a number of European nations; and radical reformers, including many in Latin America.

But what of Britain? As long ago as 1968, the government's Wootton Report attempted to reduce the high penalties for possession, and to separate cannabis controls from those for heroin and other opiates. In the early 2000s, home secretary David Blunkett appeared to confirm the general drift towards liberalisation by downgrading cannabis to a Class C drug. (By 2009, however, it had been moved back to Class B). In November 2018, a law was passed allowing doctors to prescribe medicinal cannabis products under certain circumstances.

It's impossible to foretell what the future holds in Britain. But what we can predict with some certainty is that the push and pull of domestic and international politics will continue to affect drug control. Drug regulation is, as I've said, always about so much more than the drugs. **H**



.....
Virginia Berridge is a professor at the Centre for History in Public Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine



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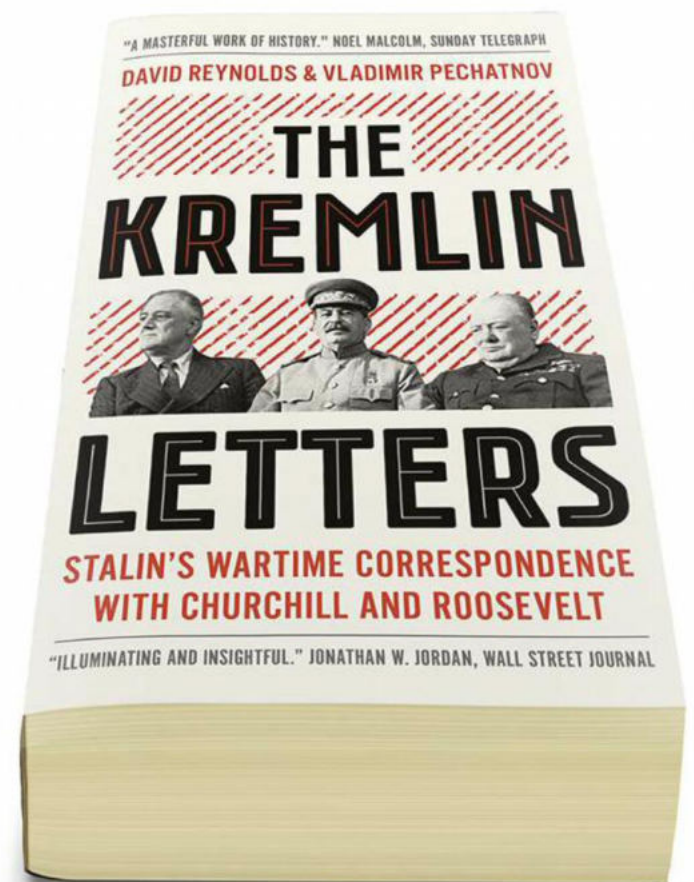
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MICHAEL WOOD ON...
ANGLO-SAXON TREASURES

// These coins hint at William the Conqueror's rampaging offensive //

Earlier this year, two metal detectorists made a dramatic discovery in Somerset. It was a coin hoard that throws fresh light on what happened on the ground in the aftermath of the most traumatic rupture in English history, the Norman conquest. The find was in the valley of the river Chew, which flows down from the Mendips to join the river Avon at the town of Keynsham. The biggest Norman coin hoard for nearly two centuries, it comprises more than 2,500 silver pennies tantalisingly divided almost equally between Harold II Godwinson, who had been killed at Hastings on 14 October 1066, and the victor, William the Conqueror.

Three 'mule' coins in the hoard have designs from dies of both reigns on either side, suggesting they were struck soon after Harold's defeat and death. This perhaps reflects indecision by an English moneyer as to the likely outcome of events, not yet certain that William would hold the throne in the light of English resistance.

William's coronation as king of England on Christmas Day 1066 was followed by a strange phoney war. But then, in early December 1067, William launched an attack on the South West, "ravaging everywhere he went", an offensive that culminated in an 18-day siege of Exeter. If we want a context for the hoard, then 1067 surely gives it. In the main towns and cities, the moneyers of the dead King Harold had to carry on with business as usual, using new dies showing William's head. Any delays and they would use the old die, ensuring that the supply of money continued smoothly. The hoard, then, perfectly illustrates this transitional moment. Buried

just off the Fosse Way south of Bath, it was most likely hidden during the Norman army's violent advance towards Exeter.

The find is also a reminder of how numismatics, the study of coins, can give remarkable insights into history, especially in the Anglo-Saxon period. One of the most fascinating aspects of the later Old English state is its sophisticated coinage. The chronicler Roger of Wendover tells how, in around AD 973, King Edgar "ordered a new coinage to be made throughout the whole of England because the old was so debased by the crime of clipping that a penny weighed hardly a half penny on the scales". Numismatists now think that later 10th-century kings may have tried to recoin every six years, adjusting silver content to inflation. Certainly, the system was more advanced than anywhere in western Europe.

Our ability to date coins with ever increasing accuracy is giving us fresh insights into other important but hitherto shadowy events. Among eight major Viking hoards found since 2003, the Watlington Hoard – discovered just south of the M40 in Oxfordshire – was buried in the immediate aftermath of Alfred the Great's victory at Edington in 878. Thirteen of its coins show Alfred of Wessex and Ceolwulf, king of the Mercians, seated side by side. This is surely evidence of an alliance, one that was subsequently covered up by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which dismissed Ceolwulf as "a foolish king's thegn".

Then there is the Harrogate hoard, discovered in 2007. Dating from the time of Æthelstan's creation of the kingdom of all England in summer 927, this find contains dirhams minted in Samarkand (modern-day Uzbekistan), a wonderful glimpse of the trade routes of the Viking Age.

Both of these discoveries were made by metal detectorists. Indeed, factor in the exquisite Staffordshire Hoard – the largest cache of Anglo-Saxon gold and silver metal-work yet found – and it's hard to overstate the importance of detectorists to the huge growth in knowledge of Anglo-Saxon England over the past 20 or so years. With discoveries properly recorded and shared immediately, metal detecting has become an indispensable part of information-gathering about our medieval past.

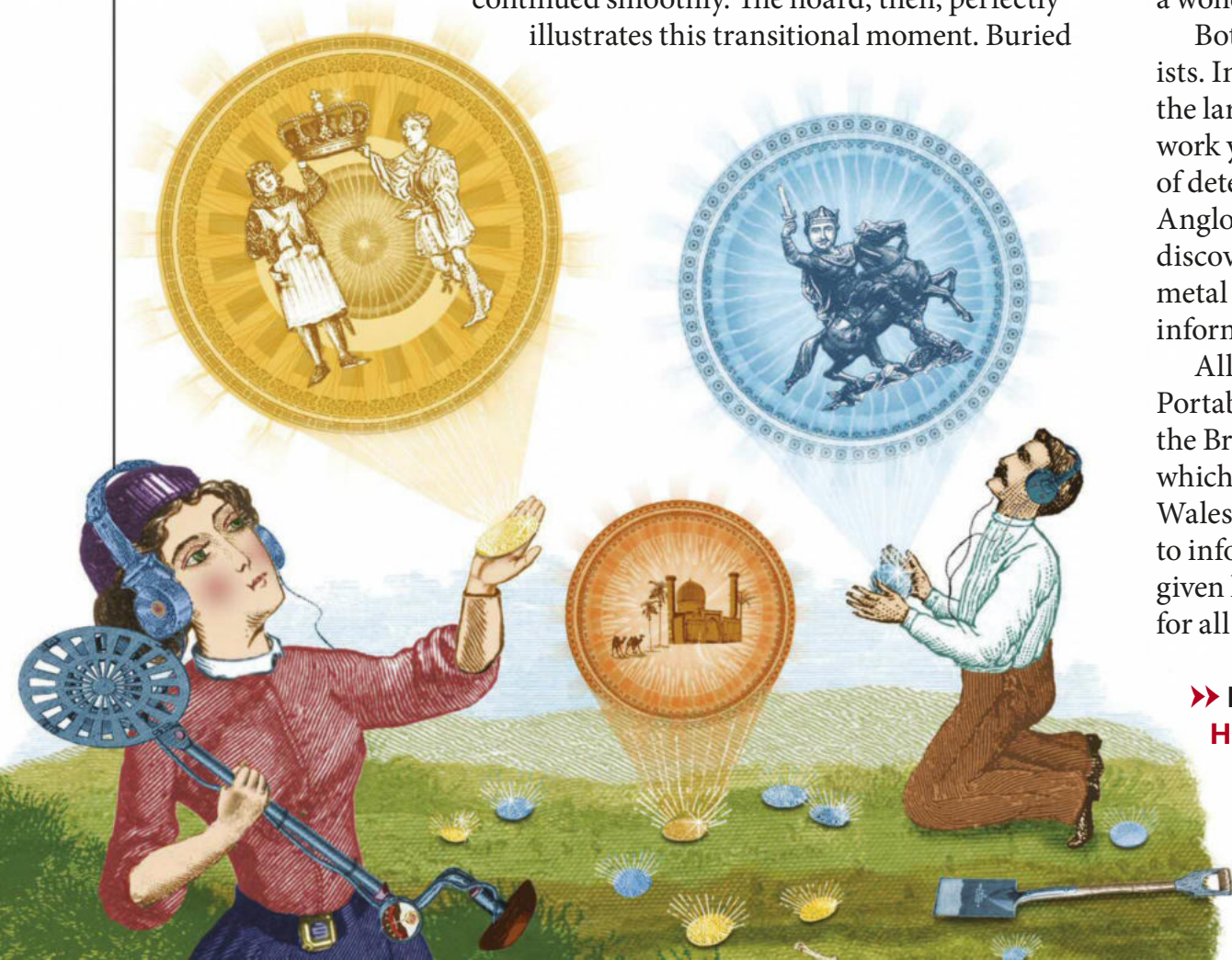
All of these discoveries are recorded in the invaluable Portable Antiquities Scheme (<https://finds.org.uk>), run by the British Museum and the National Museum of Wales, which records all chance finds made in England and Wales. It's an ongoing project that gives the public access to information on finds that have been unearthed at any given location across the two nations – a fantastic resource for all local historians. **H**

➤ Read Marc Morris's feature on **William I's Harrying of the North** on page 22

ILLUSTRATION BY FEMKE DE JONG

Michael Wood is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series, and will be appearing at our History Weekend events. Visit historyextra.com/events for details

BBC



ANNIVERSARIES

DOMINIC SANDBROOK highlights events that took place in November in history

20 NOVEMBER 284

Diocletian puts Aper to the sword

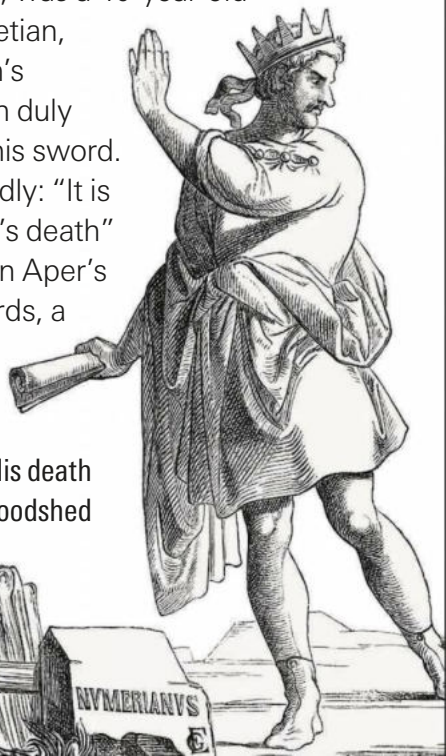
Commander avenges the death of the emperor Numerian

It was the autumn of AD 284, and the Roman army was marching home. After a successful campaign against the Persians, during which the emperor Carus had unfortunately died (reportedly, after being struck by lightning), the Romans were returning west. The forces were led by Carus's son, Numerian.

But something strange was going on. Numerian had not been seen since they had left Emesa (now called Homs, in Syria). When the soldiers asked where he was, his attendants claimed that he had an eye infection and "must protect his weakened eyes from the wind and the sun". And the soldiers could not help noticing that, from the coach where Numerian was supposedly recovering, there drifted an increasingly disgusting stench.

Eventually, when they reached Nicomedia (in what is now Turkey) on 20 November, the truth was discovered. Numerian was dead: murdered, some said, by his own father-in-law, Aper. "Then all fell upon Aper, whose treachery could no longer be hidden, and they dragged him before the standards in front of the general's tent," records the *Historia Augusta*. "Then a huge assembly was held and a tribunal, too, was constructed." The question was simple: "Who would be the most lawful avenger of Numerian and who could be given to the commonwealth as a good emperor?"

The answer, it turned out, was a 40-year-old officer from Dalmatia, Diocletian, who commanded Numerian's household troops. Diocletian duly stepped forward and drew his sword. Pointing to Aper, he said loudly: "It is he who contrived Numerian's death" – and then buried his blade in Aper's chest. It was, by any standards, a dramatic beginning for a Roman emperor.



Emperor Numerian. His death led to more bloodshed



3 NOVEMBER 1930

After a bloodless coup, the populist **Getulio Vargas** becomes president of Brazil, dominating his country's politics for the next 24 years.

**27 NOVEMBER 1810**

Mrs Tottenham's West End drama

A bizarre hoax sees the owner of a London address plagued by unwanted visitors

It was five in the morning of Tuesday, 27 November 1810, when the first caller knocked at Mrs Tottenham's house at 54 Berners Street, London. Some accounts said he was a chimney sweep, others a porter with a wagon of coal. Either way, when the maid opened the door, she insisted that he must have the wrong address, since Mrs Tottenham was not expecting any callers. Unfortunately, poor Mrs Tottenham was in for a shock.

By mid-morning, it was obvious that something very peculiar was going on. The next day's *Morning Post* described Mrs Tottenham as a "lady of fortune", and Berners Street, in the warren of lanes north of Oxford Street, was a relatively smart address.

For her neighbours, therefore, the flood of callers must have seemed all the more bizarre. By some accounts, a dozen chimney sweeps showed up, followed by men with wedding cakes, fishmongers, boot makers and pastry chefs carrying a vast array of raspberry tarts.

Then came the lawyers, summoned to Mrs Tottenham's 'deathbed'; then the priests, called to give her the last rites; then "six stout men bearing an organ, surrounded with coal merchants with permits, barbers with wigs, mantua-makers with band-boxes, opticians with their various articles of trade".

And so it went on, a huge crowd of onlookers roaring with laughter. At one point, the Lord Mayor of London even showed up in his carriage, convinced that Mrs Tottenham had asked for him personally. After it was all over – when the baffled coffin-makers, tooth-drawers and portrait-painters had gone home – it turned out that the hoax had been devised by a young man-about-town called Theodore Hook.

A few days earlier, Hook had been strolling down Berners Street with a friend, when he stopped, pointed to a random house and said: "I'll lay you a guinea that in one week that nice modest dwelling shall be the most famous in all London." The friend took the bet. And the rest, as they say, is history.



ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

A 19th-century engraving depicts a steady stream of tradespeople arriving at London's 54 Berners Street, in what became known as the 'Berners Street Hoax'

23 NOVEMBER 1248

After a gruelling siege lasting more than a year, Moorish forces in the city of **Seville finally surrender to the Castilian king** Ferdinand III.

**27 NOVEMBER 602**

Having been forced to watch the execution of his sons, the **Byzantine emperor Maurice (left) is beheaded** by the usurping centurion Flavius Phocas.

Jean Leon Gerome Ferris's depiction of the demise of Edward Teach, known as Blackbeard, ambushed on the deck of a Royal Navy ship he and his men had boarded on 22 November 1718

**22 NOVEMBER 1718**

The navy bring down Blackbeard

The notorious pirate is finally tracked down by the Royal Navy and meets a grisly end

Of all the men and women associated with the so-called 'golden age of piracy', none ever rivalled the legendary status of Blackbeard. Edward Teach was born around 1680. By the autumn of 1717, he is recorded as commanding a pirate sloop with

six guns and some 70 men, operating around the Bahamas.

According to writers of the day, Teach was a tall, lean man, with "such a figure that imagination cannot form an idea of a fury from hell to look more frightful", and black boots, a velvet coat and a wide hat.

But what really struck contemporaries was his black beard, "that large quantity of hair, which, like a frightful meteor, covered his whole face, and frightened America more than any comet that has appeared there a long time". He is supposed to have worn ribbons in his hair and stuck lighted matches under his hat; if so, he must have appeared fearsomely bizarre.

Teach's piratical career, however, did not last long. On 21 November 1718, a British naval lieutenant, Robert Maynard, tracked him down to Ocracoke Island, off the coast of North

Carolina. Early the next morning, Maynard's two sloops moved in for the kill. But Blackbeard was not going down without a fight. In his first devastating exchange of fire, he effectively disabled one of Maynard's ships; then Teach's ship, the *Adventure*, closed in for boarding.

Convinced that most of Maynard's men had been killed, Blackbeard led his men abroad, cutlasses and flintlocks in hand. But then Maynard's men burst out of the hold, where they had been hiding, and took the pirates by surprise. The fighting was brief but savage. Pushed back, Teach was slashed across the neck by one of Maynard's men; then the others moved in to finish the job.

By the time it was over, Blackbeard was dead, with five bullet wounds and about 20 stab wounds. His legend, however, endures to this day.



Disney's seminal animation film, based around classical music, became an instant classic in its own right

13 NOVEMBER 1940

Fantasia makes movie history

Walt Disney's animation receives rapturous praise from critics

“At the risk of being utterly obvious,” began the *New York Times*'s review on 14 November 1940, “let us begin by noting that motion-picture history was made at the Broadway Theatre last night with the spectacular world première of Walt Disney's long-awaited *Fantasia*.”

The *Times* was not exaggerating. Four years after Walt Disney had come up with the idea of interweaving animation and classical music, and at a then-enormous cost of more than \$2m, *Fantasia* was the cultural sensation of the season. Not only had the film devoured the talents of some 1,000 animators, but Disney had spent a colossal \$200,000 devising a special new sound system, *Fantasound*, to “create the illusion that the actual symphony orchestra is playing in the theater”.

All this, just for a film about classical music? Disney's usual distributors, RKO, got cold feet and refused to organise a general release. But when *Fantasia* opened in New York's Broadway Theatre, the reaction was sheer ecstasy.

With London under siege by Hitler's bombers, proceeds from the premiere went to the British War Relief Society. Everybody wanted to be there, and the theatre even had to take on extra telephonists to cope with the demand. And the reviewers were bowled over by Disney's extraordinary ambition. *Fantasia* might be “caviar to the general”, wrote one critic, but it was “ambrosia and nectar for the intelligent-sia”. It was “simply terrific”, agreed the *New York Times*, “as terrific as anything that has ever happened on a screen”. **H**

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Dominic Sandbrook is a historian, author and broadcaster. His latest book is *Who Dares Wins: Britain, 1979–1982* (Allen Lane, 2019)

WHY WE SHOULD REMEMBER...

The first ever Armistice Day, when Britain counted the cost of war

BY CATRIONA PENNELL

IN NOVEMBER 1919, Britain marked the first anniversary of the end of the Great War. Signed one year earlier between Germany and the Allies, the armistice came into effect on “the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month”, as the guns fell silent along the western front. The moment marked the conclusion of a conflict that had cost Britain and its empire nearly a million lives. Such unprecedented losses triggered the desire to find lasting expression of the British people's gratitude.

As the popular ‘Gunpowder Treason Day’ (as it was first known) demonstrated, doctoring the national calendar for the purposes of commemoration and political legitimisation was not new. Yet the proper format and timing for the nation's collective act of remembrance were not immediately obvious. It was Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, former British high commissioner to South Africa, who suggested a ceremony modelled on South Africa's ‘three minutes’ pause’. The plans for a (slightly shorter) two minutes’ silence at 11am on 11 November were officially announced by George V in all newspapers on 7 November 1919.

The first Armistice Day ceremonies emphasised solemnity and mourning. Most chose to stand silently in a public place with their heads bowed, often wearing black. With few permanent memorials built by November 1919, people gathered in civic centres or at places of worship. In London, crowds congregated at the newly erected Cenotaph in Whitehall to lay wreaths. The silence was signalled in various ways, most commonly by maroons (a firework-like device), church bells or town hall clocks. For two minutes, everything stopped.

During the Second World War, remembrance participation dwindled as people focused on surviving. After 1945, it became necessary to remember those killed in a new conflict. Thus, the Sunday nearest Armistice Day (‘Remembrance Sunday’) was chosen to observe the silence, diluting the centrality of the First World War. Making it part of church services meant people had to expend more effort to participate and interest in remembrance declined.

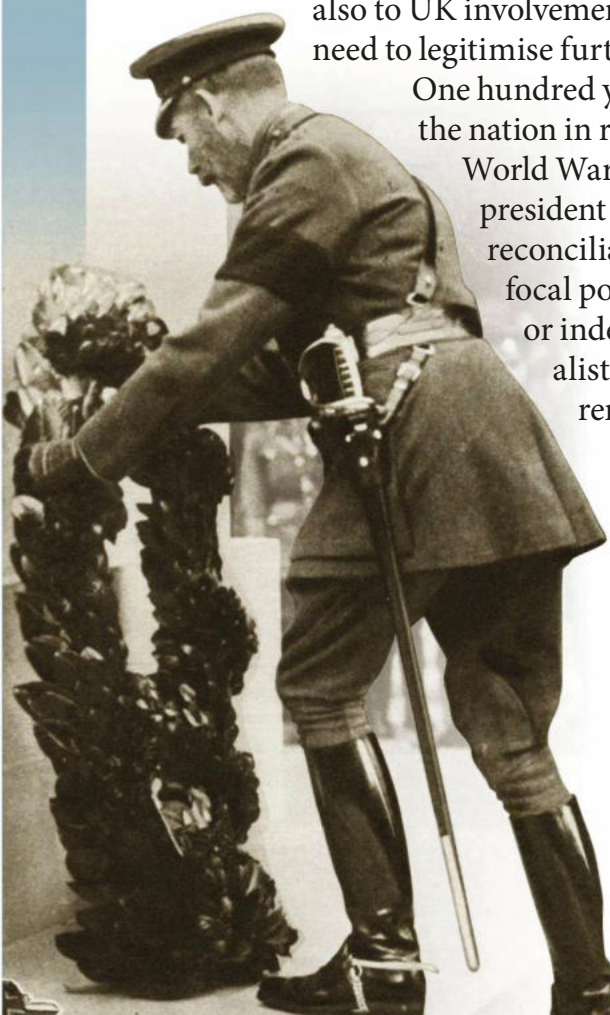
In 1995, Armistice Day returned when the Royal British Legion lobbied to reintroduce the silence on 11 November as well as Remembrance Sunday. The recent resurgent interest is due, in part, to the declining numbers of veterans but also to UK involvement in wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the need to legitimise further sacrifice.

One hundred years after the ceasefire, the Prince of Wales led the nation in remembering those who died in the First World War. He was joined at the Cenotaph by German president Frank-Walter Steinmeier in a historic act of reconciliation. To what extent Armistice Day remains a focal point of the British commemorative calendar – or indeed continues to encourage such internationalist gestures – in the aftermath of its centenary remains to be seen. **H**



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Catriona Pennell is associate professor of history at the University of Exeter and co editor, with Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses, of *A World at War, 1911–1949: Explorations in the Cultural History of War* (Brill, 2019)

King George V lays a wreath at the foot of the cenotaph on the first Armistice Day, 11 November 1919





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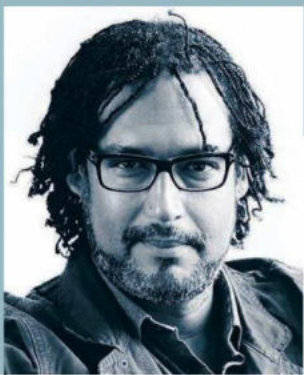
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HIDDEN HISTORIES

DAVID OLUSOGA explores lesser-known stories from our past

// In Thailand, a white elephant is a symbol of majesty, not mockery //

On 28 September 1917, the kingdom of Siam (modern-day Thailand) adopted a new flag. The decision came in the shape of a royal decree, issued by King Rama VI. Having already declared war on Germany, and begun to assemble a Siamese Expeditionary Force that was later sent to the western front, Siam had joined what would prove to be the winning side in the First World War. The new national flag, the Thong Trairong (the Siamese Tricolour), which remains the flag of Thailand today, emphasised Siam's place among the Allied nations. Red, white and blue, it sat comfortably alongside the union flag of Britain, the US's Stars and Stripes and the Tricolore of France.

In their determination to signal Siam's status as a modern independent state, the kingdom's leaders abandoned its previous flag, the Thong Chang Puak, or 'Elephant Banner'. The old flag featured a white elephant against a background of deep red – a reference to the sacred white elephants that for centuries have been kept by the kings of Siam and Thailand. Today in Bangkok there are 11 royal white elephants, five of whom hold royal titles. These are the survivors of a group of 21 accrued by the late king Bhumibol, styled Rama IX, during his long reign. This record number was significant in a nation where the number of white elephants owned by a monarch is regarded as a symbol of his status and majesty. In May

this year, when the new king, Vajiralongkorn (Rama X), was crowned, white-painted elephants were paraded through the capital. Meticulously trained, they were made to kneel in front of portraits of the monarch.

Thailand's white elephants are in fact closer to pink or tawny brown in colour. They are considered divine, and all of those discovered belong by law to the king, whether wild or captive. As well as being part of the theatre of the royal court, white elephants have traditionally been part of Thai diplomacy. For centuries, kings of Siam gave white elephants as gifts to the leaders of other states. There is also the legend that some Siamese kings gifted white elephants to nobles who had fallen from favour. As these huge animals are holy, and could not be put to work, and as the cost of keeping them fed and watered was enormous, it was said that this royal gift could lead to financial ruin. It is from here that westerners derive the habit of labelling failed and expensive building projects as 'white elephants'.

The tradition of offering elephants as diplomatic gifts was evident in 1862, when another of Thailand's great kings, Mongkut, sent a letter to US president James Buchanan in which he offered Washington a number of Thai elephants as a gift. In this case the animals on offer were not the revered white elephants but working elephants, then used by the Thais in the logging industry. By the time the letter arrived, Buchanan had left office, Abraham Lincoln was president and the United States was in the midst of the Civil War. It therefore fell

to Lincoln and his secretary of state, William Seward, to delicately respond. Thanking the Thai king, Lincoln explained that his government "would not hesitate to avail itself of so generous an offer if the object were one which could be made practically useful in the present condition of the United States". Sadly, Lincoln explained, the climate of the US did not favour "the multiplication of the elephant" and that "on land, as well as on water" the steam engine was regarded as the "most efficient agent of transportation in internal commerce". No elephants were sent to the US, and relations between Bangkok and Washington were not harmed by their rejection. **H**

Animal kingdom

Elephants under the command of their mahouts pay their respects to Thailand's King Vajiralongkorn near the Grand Palace in Bangkok



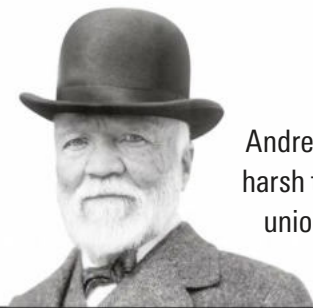
David Olusoga is professor of public history at the University of Manchester, and the presenter of several BBC documentaries



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LETTERS



Andrew Carnegie used harsh tactics against steel unions, says reader
Andrew Hudson

LETTER OF THE MONTH

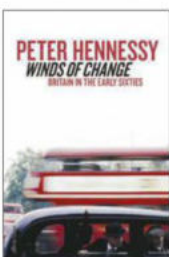
Behatted hooligans

I greatly enjoyed Andrew Davies's article (*The Real Peaky Blinders*) in the September 2019 edition. As a child in 1950s Birmingham, I was looked after during the long school holidays by my grandparents, while mum and dad worked in the type of factories that have long-since disappeared. granddad (born 1899) would entertain me with stories of the peaky blinders.

To him they were the working-class hooligans portrayed in Davies's article, with nothing of the Shelbys' [who feature in the TV drama] rise to fame and fortune about them. There was also a distinct sectarian flavour to the violence in his tales, something else that Davies records.

While I am sure that Andrew Davies is correct in ascribing the peaky blinders name to the billy-cock hat, many of the 'sloggers' wore flat caps and granddad was very clear that they had razors sewn into the peaks.

Ian Davis, Rugby



We reward the *Letter of the Month* writer with a copy of a new history book. This issue, that is **Winds of Change: Britain in the Early Sixties** by Peter Hennessy. Read the review on page 72

Pioneering medic

Eugene Byrne's excellent article on the creation of the first housing estates (*From the Slums to the Suburbs*, September) has an important omission. Work by medical officers of health, especially George M'Gonigle in Stockton-on-Tees in the 1930s, found that rates of malnutrition in the new model council estates actually increased compared to the slums they replaced.

This was due to the combination of the poor economic surroundings and the increased rents for the new housing. This put the effects of new housing in a wider socioeconomic context and had an important effect on the 'joining up' of policy. These efforts earned M'Gonigle the title of 'The Housewife's Champion', and he is commemorated in a blue plaque in the village of Norton, just outside Stockton.

Dr Tom McKinnell, former GP registrar in Norton

Cheap eats

I was interested to read your article in the September issue regarding the development of social housing in the UK, especially the mentioning of the large London County Council estate in Barking/Dagenham that was built in the 1920s and early 1930s. It reminded me that it was known locally as 'Corned Beef City'.

There were three theories about how it became known as that. Firstly, that the residents all washed in tin baths that looked like cans of corned beef – unlikely, as I am sure there would have been proper bathrooms in the new houses! Secondly, that the estate was universally built of red brick, giving the houses the look of being made of corned

beef, which is possible. But the third and most likely explanation was that corned beef was all that the residents could afford to eat.

Perry Cassidy, London

Killer arguments

I was disappointed by Tony Boullemier's letter in the October issue suggesting that the unproven theory that Margaret Beaufort killed the princes in



New homes being built in Becontree in 1924. Social housing transformed many British cities in the interwar period

the Tower is "highly likely".

There is good reason why this theory is a favourite of novelists, but historians have little time for it. Not only did it originate centuries after the event, it simply makes no sense.

First, Margaret lacked serious motive. There is evidence that, before his death, Edward IV entertained the possibility of allowing Henry Tudor to return to England and may even have considered marrying him to his daughter Elizabeth. Thus, it better served Margaret to have the young Edward V alive and on the throne. Which might explain why she was implicated in a plot to break the princes out of the Tower. After this unsuccessful coup in 1483, she lived far from London – a fact Mr Boullemier neglects to mention.

Most relevant of all is the simple logic that killing the princes in 1483 would not have cleared Tudor's path to the throne. On the contrary, it only placed Richard III, a far more formidable opponent, in his way. A grown man with military experience and an heir of his own was a greater threat to Tudor than the malleable Edward V.

If she thought killing the princes would make her son king, Margaret Beaufort would either have had to have been very foolish or a psychic. I doubt she was either.

Joanna Arman, Chichester

Ill-gotten gains

Gordon Brown glosses over Andrew Carnegie's attitude towards his workers in his brief reference to a strike that ended in violence and death (*Encounters*, September). I assume the incident was at the Homestead steel plant in Pennsylvania, where Carnegie, who once



Margaret Beaufort, Tudor matriarch and a key figure in the Wars of the Roses



claimed to be a champion of the rights of labour, appointed a notorious union buster, Henry Clay Frick, to run the plant. Pay and conditions were cut, and Frick also insisted on bringing in individual negotiations.

A strike ensued and Frick hired Pinkerton agents to escort the strike breakers. Homestead's mayor, who along with the sheriff supported the strikers, condemned the use of Pinkerton agents and Glasgow Trades Council passed a motion describing Carnegie as the new Judas Iscariot.

Carnegie's benevolence was largely from the proceeds of exploitation. Do we really want to reinvigorate a scenario where public services are reliant on the largesse of a handful of wealthy individuals?

Andrew Hudson, Cumbria

Jumbo limb count

I was delighted to see from your preview for the November edition (*Next month*, October) that East India Company officials used five-legged elephants, perhaps even insisting on these no doubt extra-speedy creatures. I suppose that – in cutting around the image for publication – you included the leg of another elephant that featured in the original illustration. But I still live in hope of it illustrating an evolutionary advance!

Tina Rowe, Ilchester

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Vol 20 No 11 – November 2019
 BBC History Magazine is published by Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited under licence from BBC Studios who help fund new BBC programmes.

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War criminal?

William the Conqueror shown on horseback in the Bayeux Tapestry. The king's Harrying of the North was a military success but a human catastrophe – one that even appalled chroniclers traditionally sympathetic to the Norman regime

“The Conqueror
massacred
almost the whole
population, from
the very young
to the old and grey”

William I's Harrying of the North of England over the winter of 1069/70 resulted in perhaps 150,000 deaths, reducing many victims to eating cats, dogs and even one another. So should it, asks **Marc Morris**, be branded a genocide?

In 1069 William the Conqueror celebrated Christmas in York. It was exactly three years since his coronation as king of England, which had taken place in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066, just a few weeks after his victory at the battle of Hastings. To mark the anniversary, William had ordered his crown and other regalia to be brought from Winchester to York, so he could wear them ceremoniously during the winter festivities.

But the mood in York that Christmas can hardly have been very festive, for throughout 1069 the city had been subjected to repeated waves of violence. The cathedral church of York Minster – presumably the location in which the king heard Mass on Christmas morning – was in a terrible state, having been ransacked by William’s soldiers during the spring. In the words of the contemporary Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, it was “completely laid waste and burned down”. Much of the rest of the city, meanwhile, had been reduced to ashes by a fire started by the garrisons of its two new Norman castles in September, and the castles themselves had subsequently been destroyed by an invading Danish army. The English archbishop of York, Ealdred, had been so distressed by the news that the Danes were coming that he had fallen ill and died shortly before their arrival.

Since William’s own arrival in December, however, the suffering had increased dramatically. A few weeks earlier, he had divided his army up into small units and sent

them out into the Yorkshire countryside with orders to burn and destroy everything that was capable of sustaining human life – the barns full of carefully harvested crops, the

Land grab

William I invests Alain of Brittany with territory in Yorkshire seized from the rebel Earl Edwin, as depicted in a 15th-century illustration



beasts still standing in the fields, and those that had already been slaughtered as food for the winter. Consequently, while the king feasted that Christmas, many others were beginning to starve and, in the months that followed, countless thousands would die as a result of famine.

This episode, known since the late 19th century as ‘the Harrying of the North’, was the most notorious of the Conqueror’s career. “Nowhere else,” said the 12th-century historian Orderic Vitalis, “had William shown such cruelty.” Yet 950 years after the event, historians continue to disagree over its extent, its long-term effects, and even its morality. Some doubt that the king’s troops could have caused so much destruction in such a short space of time. Some have accused William of committing genocide, while others have insisted that this was a perfectly normal way for a medieval ruler to make war. At the distance of almost a millennium, is it possible to reach a meaningful verdict?

England in revolt

The Conqueror had come north in the autumn of 1069 to deal with a rebellion, the most serious of his reign to date. Almost as soon as he had been crowned, William had faced uprisings from Englishmen determined to reverse the outcome of Hastings. In the summer of 1067, while he was celebrating his victory in Normandy, there had been revolts in Kent and the Welsh Marches. Towards the end of the same year, warnings of a larger rebellion had brought him back to England, and he had spent the early months of 1068 in the West Country, suppressing resistance orchestrated by the surviving members of the family of Harold Godwinson.

Then, during the summer, a conspiracy involving the earls of Mercia and Northumbria had led William to carry war into those regions, planting castles in Warwick, Nottingham, Lincoln, Cambridge, Huntingdon and York. Castles were still a novelty in England, and Orderic Vitalis attributed the success of this campaign to their construction. Because of these new fortifications, said the chronicler, “the English, in spite of their courage and love of fighting, could put up only a weak resistance”.

While the Midlands were tamed by this military innovation, the north was barely affected, with the single castle at York serving as a lone outpost of William’s authority. But that was about to change. When a foreign-born mercenary named Robert Cumin was appointed as the new Earl of Northumbria at the start of 1069, the Northumbrians responded by slaughtering him in Durham, along with all his men, and then marching



Power base Normans construct fortifications at Hastings in a scene from the Bayeux Tapestry. Castles gave the Conqueror the military edge during the first English revolts against his rule



A map of post-Conquest England. The orange shading indicates the area most devastated by the Harrying of the North. The map also shows the network of castles that William I built in response to an uprising in 1068



In the face of the rebellion, William must have feared that the Norman conquest was in danger of being reversed

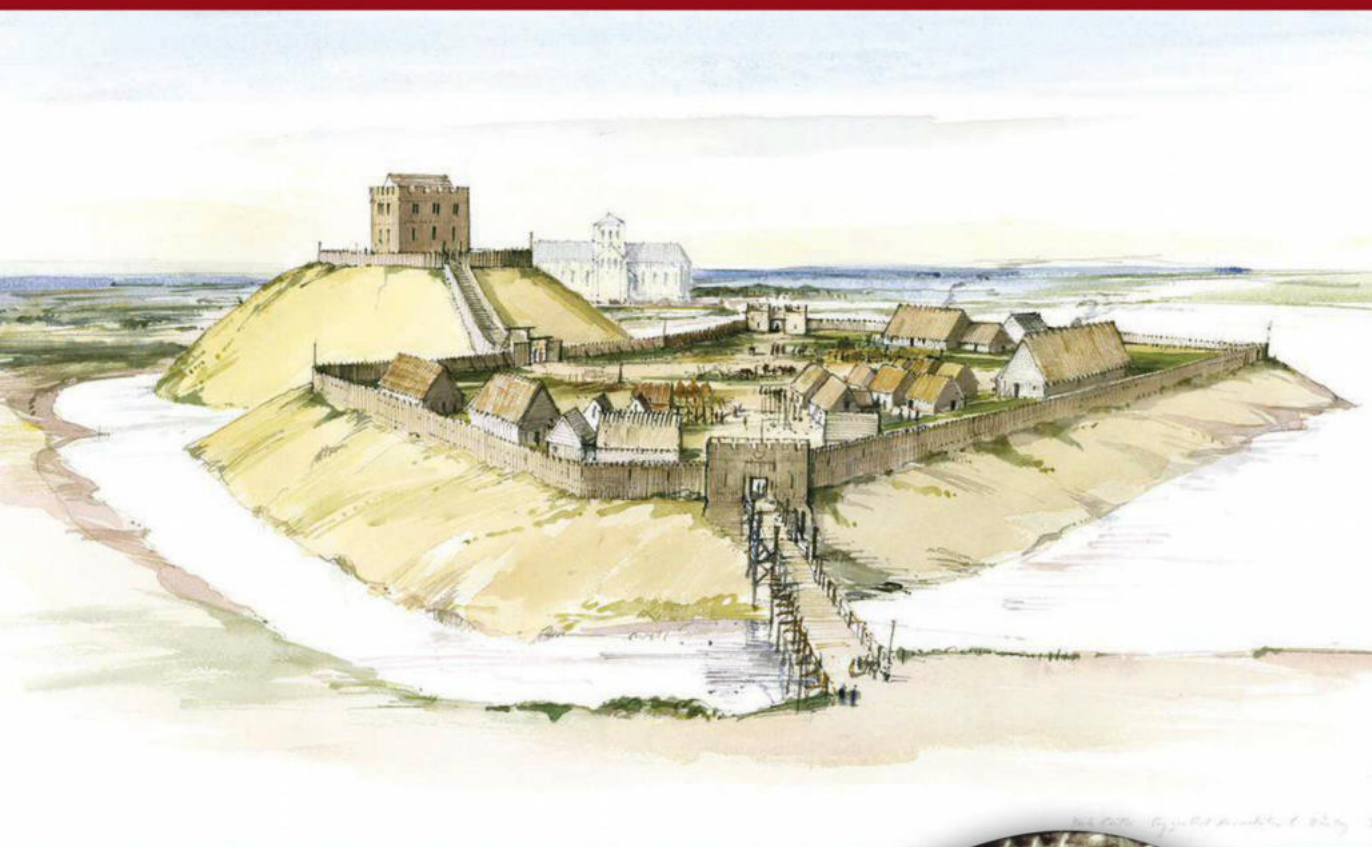
south, hoping to retake York. William, who was back in Normandy, was once again forced to rush across the Channel and advance into northern England in order to raise the siege. Before returning south, he reinforced York with a second castle on the opposite banks of the Ouse.

But two castles were not enough to save the city when a third northern rebellion erupted at the end of the summer. This time the trigger was an invasion sponsored by King Swein of Denmark, led by his brother, Asbjorn. Northern England had strong cultural and commercial links with Scandinavia as a result of earlier Viking settlement, and Danish intervention was evidently seen by many natives as preferable to rule by Normans. The leaders of Northumbrian society who had fled to Scotland the previous year now returned, “riding and marching with an immense host, rejoicing exceedingly”, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Together with the Danes they seized York, destroyed both its castles, and put the city’s sizeable Norman garrison to the sword.

Conquest on the line

When William marched his army north in the autumn of 1069, therefore, it was with the knowledge that his earlier strategy had failed. He must also have been afraid that the Norman conquest, which we take for granted as a decisive historical turning point, was in serious danger of being reversed. Among the rebels was Edgar Ætheling, a member of the Old English royal line who had been proclaimed king in London after the battle of Hastings, and may have been crowned in York that autumn.

As William was struggling to tackle the rebellion in the north, new risings broke out in both the West Country and the Welsh Marches, forcing him to send troops and commanders from his side, and eventually obliging him to cross the Pennines and confront these rebels in person. When he returned to Yorkshire in December, he was frustrated to discover that the Danes had returned to their ships in the river



Scene of the crime

York Castle as it might have appeared in the late 11th century. The Normans built the motte and bailey fortification in 1068, but it was destroyed soon after by English rebels with the help of a Danish army

Rebel alliance

A Viking coin minted in England in the 10th–11th centuries. The bloodiest uprising against the Normans in northern England was inspired by a Danish invasion in 1069



Cover story **Harrying of the North**

Innocents under fire

The Bayeux Tapestry shows a woman and child fleeing a burning house. “So terrible a famine fell upon the people,” wrote Orderic Vitalis of the Norman offensive in the north, “that more than 100,000 Christian folk perished of hunger”



Humber and were beyond his reach.

Faced with the prospect of defeat, William decided on a new, twofold solution. His first move was to buy off the Danes, promising them a large sum of money and permission to plunder the coast, provided they departed in the spring. The next step was to render northern England uninhabitable by subjecting it to a merciless harrying. There was military strategy in this. As another 12th-century historian, William of Malmesbury, explains, by destroying everything, the king was ensuring that there would be nothing to sustain the Danish army if they reneged on their pledge to go home. But, as both Malmesbury and Orderic attest, the king also ordered the harrying because he was angry. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of his soldiers had been killed at the start of the year in Durham and more recently in York. William, says Orderic, “made no effort to restrain his fury”. The harrying was an act of vengeance.

From a purely military point of view, the campaign of devastation was a great success. At the start of the new year, William

pursued the native leaders of the north as far as the river Tees, where they were forced to submit. The Danes, who predictably failed to leave as promised, were reduced to a miserable diet and considerable hardship – so much so that, when their king arrived in the spring of 1070, expecting to lead them to victory, he was quickly persuaded to make terms and depart. For the rest of William’s reign, there were no further risings in northern England. Edgar Ætheling, who fled back to Scotland and then to Flanders, eventually made his peace with the king in 1074.

Eating horses and humans

But from a human perspective, and a moral one, the campaign had been appalling. “So terrible a famine fell upon the people,” wrote Orderic, “that more than 100,000 Christian folk of both sexes, young and old alike, perished of hunger.”

Another 12th-century writer, John of Worcester, reported that people were reduced to eating horses, dogs, cats and even human flesh. Simeon of Durham, adding to John’s account, asserted that the land between York

and Durham lay uncultivated for the next nine years, its deserted villages haunted only by wild beasts and robbers.

It is sometimes objected that these 12th-century chroniclers are too late to be credible, and that more closely contemporary accounts are not as sensational or as judgmental. But there is enough earlier evidence to corroborate the claims of later writers. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a telegraphically terse source for this period, reports that William went to Yorkshire in 1069 and “ruined it completely”. William of Jumièges, who was possibly writing his *Deeds of the Norman Dukes* at the behest of the Conqueror himself, described how the king “massacred almost the whole population, from the very young to the old and grey”.

Marianus Scotus, writing in Germany in the 1070s, reported that famine in England had caused people to resort to cannibalism, substantiating the account of John of Worcester. Most compelling of all, the late 11th-century chronicler at Evesham Abbey in Worcestershire penned a haunting picture of starving refugees turning up in great numbers at the abbey gates, only to die from exhaustion, or “through eating food too

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A lost world Englishmen plough the land in a c1030 calendar. So devastating was the Harrying of the North that two-thirds of Yorkshire was still being described as “waste” in Domesday Book, almost two decades after Norman troops had rampaged through the area

ravenously” – a line that recalls the tragic fate of some of those liberated from Nazi concentration camps. “Every day,” the Evesham Chronicler lamented, “five or six people, sometime more, perished miserably and were buried by the prior of this place.”

The extent of the human suffering is also confirmed by Domesday Book. The famous document, the product of a kingdom-wide inquiry into landholding carried out at William’s command in 1086, is a uniquely valuable source for historians, not least because it preserves statistical data for not one but two (sometimes three) sets of dates – the condition a particular estate was in at the time of the survey, and its condition in 1066. Domesday can thus be used to demonstrate precisely how much had changed as a result of the Conquest, and in the case of the Harrying the answer is: a lot.

In the folios that cover the northern shires – and, most especially, Yorkshire – the word that occurs time and again is “waste” (Latin: *vasta*). And the counties with the most waste were those in northern England and the Welsh Marches, harried by William in 1069–70, and also Sussex, which had been ravaged during the Hastings campaign. But the overwhelming majority of waste was concentrated in Yorkshire, which accounted for more than 80 per cent of the total for all of England. Other shires had recovered their values by the time of the survey, but in Yorkshire almost two-thirds of all holdings were still described as waste in 1086. Since 1066 the shire had lost more than 80,000 oxen and 150,000 people.

Domesday, in other words, corroborates the scale of the death-toll given by Orderic Vitalis. Like most medieval chroniclers, Orderic had probably plucked his figure of 100,000 from the sky to mean “an awful lot”, but on this occasion the administrative record suggests he may actually have under-recorded the scale of human losses.

One account asserted that, for nine years, the land between York and Durham was haunted only by wild beasts and robbers

It is the scale of the suffering, in the end, that serves to condemn William. Historians will point out that harrying was the normal method of warfare practised by premodern armies. The Roman writer Vegetius, whose manual *On Military Matters* was much read in the Middle Ages, insisted that the whole point of war was “to secure supplies for oneself while destroying the enemy by famine”. The Vikings had repeatedly harried England in the early 11th century, and the shortlived King Harthacnut had harried the people of Worcestershire.

Burning and killing

But, as the historian John Gillingham observes, it was rare that ravaging “was taken to the point of starving non-combatants to death”. Looting, burning and killing were all normal practice, but William’s destruction of all means of sustenance in Yorkshire was clearly extraordinary in its extent and thoroughness. The king must have known that the human cost would be terrible, but he nevertheless gave the order.

In modern times we would have no hesitation in branding such an act as genocide – a term coined in 1944. Contemporaries did not do so, but they were clearly shocked by the amount of death William had caused. According to Orderic Vitalis, one soldier in

the king’s army, Gilbert d’Auffay, returned to Normandy at this point, declining the offer of estates in England. Another, named Reinfrid, moved to sorrow by the effects of the Harrying, became a monk at Evesham, and later returned to Yorkshire to refound the derelict abbey of Whitby.

The most shocked of all was Orderic himself. As a monk writing in Normandy in the 1120s, he looked back fondly on William’s reign. A major source for his own chronicle was a contemporary biography of the king written by William of Poitiers; Orderic was for the most part content to parrot its praise.

But although he had spent most of his life in Normandy, Orderic had been born in England, and his mother was English. Born just five years after the Harrying, he must have heard many tales of horror from his mother and other locals until his father sent him to Normandy at the age of 10. Accordingly, when he came to write about these events, he departed from his usual panegyric. “When I think of helpless children, young men in the prime of life, and hoary grey-beards all perishing of hunger,” he said, “I am so moved to pity that I would rather lament the grief and sufferings of the wretched people than make a vain attempt to flatter the perpetrator of such infamy.”

William had broken no human law, and would not be condemned by any earthly court. But Orderic declared that the king’s “brutal slaughter” would surely be punished. “For the almighty Judge watches over high and low alike; he will weigh the deeds of all in an even balance and, as a just avenger, will punish wrongdoing, as the eternal law makes clear to all men.” **H**

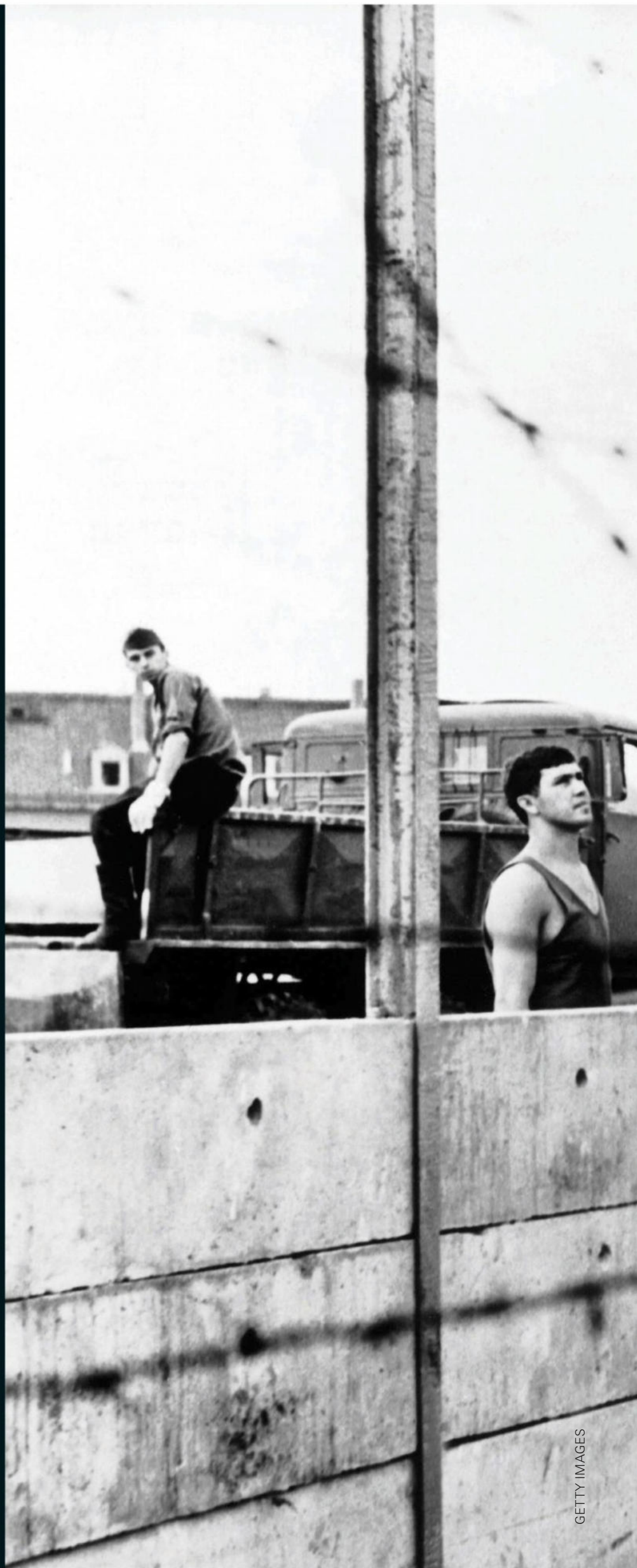
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Dr Marc Morris is the author of *The Norman Conquest* (Windmill Books, 2013) and *William I: England’s Conqueror* (Allen Lane, 2016)

ESCAPE FROM EAST BERLIN

The building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 triggered a rush of escape bids – none more ambitious than one masterminded by a student named Joachim Rudolph. **Helena Merriman** tells a story of flooded tunnels, Stasi spies and families reunited – filmed live for American TV

Accompanies the
BBC Radio Four series
Tunnel 29, airing in
late October

BBC
RADIO



GETTY IMAGES



Setting a trap

East German soldiers construct the Berlin Wall, 13 August 1961. The barrier was an attempt to stop the flood of Germans fleeing from east to west – yet, as scores of audacious escape bids attest, it didn't entirely succeed

The Berlin Wall

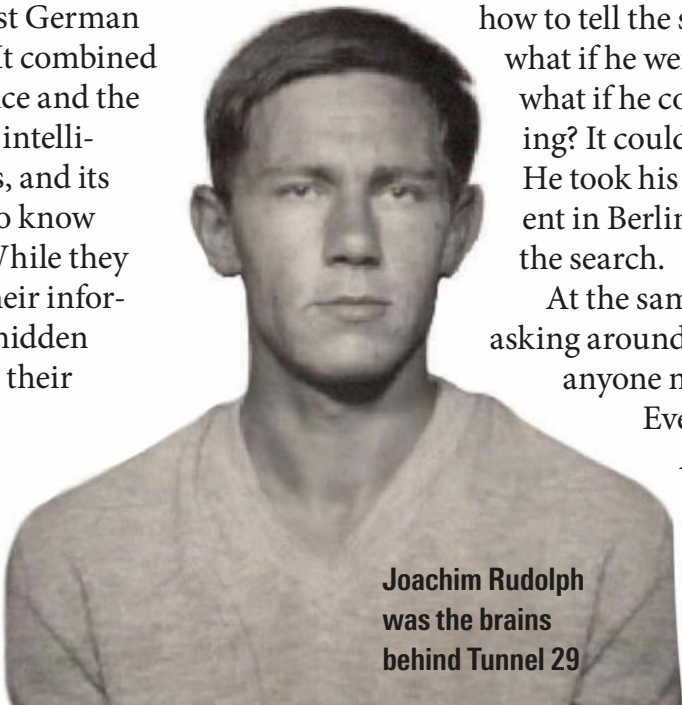
It's the middle of the night and Joachim Rudolph is wading through a river. There's a watchtower above him with border guards inside; he knows they'll kill him if they see him. He clambers up a bank, crawls through a field, and as the sun begins to rise, he realises he's made it. He's escaped to West Berlin.

This was September 1961, a little less than two months after the Berlin Wall had gone up. It was built by the East German government to stop the flood of people leaving the communist dictatorship for a better life in the west. What made this wall so extraordinary was the speed at which it was built. Ten thousand East German soldiers had gone into the streets in the dead of night, stringing barbed wire from posts and making concrete barricades. When people woke up on 13 August 1961, they suddenly found themselves on one side of the wall: wives were cut off from their husbands; brothers from their sisters. There were even stories of newborn babies in the west now separated from their mothers.

That very day, the escapes had begun. Some just jumped over the barbed wire; others were more inventive, like the couple who swam across the river Spree, pushing their three-year-old daughter in front of them in a bathtub. Joachim had spent weeks planning his escape, and now he'd done it. He enrolled in an engineering course at a West Berlin university and was beginning his new life, when one morning there was a knock at the door. It was two students. They had a plan to build a tunnel to get some friends out of the East and they wanted Joachim to help dig it.

A nest of spies

There's an old East German joke: why do Stasi officers make such good taxi drivers? Because you get in the car, and they already know your name and where you live. The Ministry for State Security (otherwise known as the Stasi) was the most powerful part of the East German government. It combined the secret police and the government's intelligence services, and its mission was to know everything. While they got some of their information from hidden microphones, their



Joachim Rudolph was the brains behind Tunnel 29

greatest assets were their informants. They had hundreds of thousands of them, a higher proportion than most other secret police in history. On 28 September 1961, they were just about to recruit one: a hairdresser called Siegfried Uhse. They'd caught him carrying smuggled cigarettes for a "homosexual orgy" and told him he could avoid prison if he became a Stasi agent. Much of what follows comes from the files connected to him, which are kept in the Stasi Archives, a huge underground vault in East Berlin, in what used to be the Stasi headquarters. There are 2,735 documents about him, recording everything from his favourite books (he hated cheap romance novels, loved Tolstoy) as well as his first assignment: to look for *fluchthelfers* – the German word for escape helpers. These were people in the West who helped people in the East escape. In other words, he was now on the hunt for people just like Joachim.

As Siegfried began his secret assignment, Joachim and the others were getting to work on the tunnel. They stole spades and pickaxes from a cemetery, recruited more diggers from the university and persuaded a factory owner to let them start digging from his cellar. Then on 9 May 1962, just before midnight, the group drove to the factory, went into the cellar and began digging. "We had no idea where to start," Joachim told me when I interviewed him for the Radio 4 series *Tunnel 29*. "We'd never seen a real tunnel. But we'd seen footage of tunnels on TV, ones that had failed, and that gave us ideas about how to dig one." They hacked into the concrete and dug out the screed and clay until they had a small hole. They made it deep enough so they wouldn't run into the city's water table and then started digging horizontally towards the East. After a few weeks, they were exhausted, but they hadn't even reached the border yet. They needed two things: people and money.

Thousands of miles away in New York, Reuven Frank, a hot-shot TV executive at the American network NBC, was thinking about how to tell the story of Berlin. He had an idea: what if he were to tell an escape story? And what if he could film it as it was happening? It could revolutionise television news. He took his idea to the NBC correspondent in Berlin, Piers Anderton, who began the search.

At the same time, the diggers were asking around in media circles whether anyone might stump up some money.

Eventually, they met Piers Anderton and brought him to see the tunnel. He was impressed and went straight back to his boss, Reuven Frank, to ask if he'd agree to fund them. Reuven said yes:



Two worlds collide

The Berlin Wall runs along Bernauer Strasse. The apartments overlooking the street were the starting point for numerous escape bids

Abteilung - II/3 - 300181 Berlin, den 9.4.1962

Auskunftsbericht

Personalien:

Name	: U h s e
Vorname	: Siegfried
Geb. am, in	: 9.7.1940 in Sorau
wohnhaft in	: Berlin W 30, Augsburgerstr. Hinterhaus
Beruf	: Friseur
Tätigkeit	: Friseur
Arbeitsstelle	: Salon [redacted] Shop Mc Hair Berlin - Zellendorf Goernallee
Telefon im Betrieb	: [redacted]
Wohnungsanschlus	: ohne
Familienstand	: ledig
Kinder	: ohne
Partei vor 1945	: ohne
nach 1945	: ohne
Organisationen	: keine
Militärverhältnis	: ohne
Vorstrafen	: [redacted]

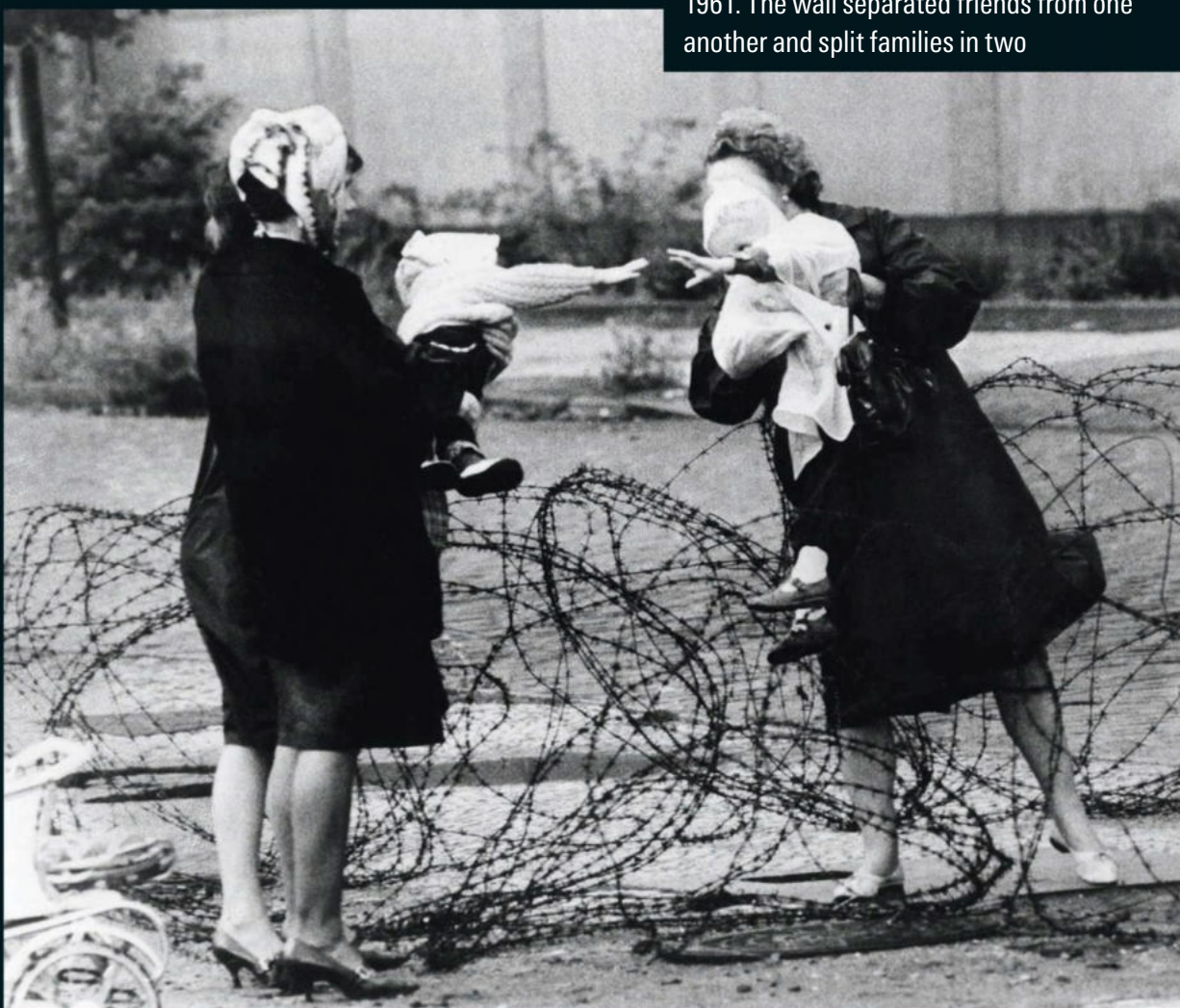
Insider information

One of the 2,735 Stasi documents on Siegfried Uhse. In 1962, the hairdresser-turned-informer betrayed what was then the biggest escape operation ever planned from West Berlin



So near yet so far

Barbed wire divides Berliners in August 1961. The wall separated friends from one another and split families in two



BTSU/JOACHIM RUDOLPH/GETTY IMAGES

A HOT-SHOT NBC EXECUTIVE HAD AN IDEA: WHAT IF HE WERE TO TELL AN ESCAPE STORY? AND WHAT IF HE COULD FILM IT AS IT WAS HAPPENING?

NBC would give the diggers money for tools and materials (limited to \$7,500) and in return, NBC would have the right to film everything. And with that, Reuven Frank had just made one of the most controversial decisions in the history of TV news: a top American news network had agreed to fund a group of students building an escape tunnel under the Berlin Wall.

By the end of June 1962, thanks to the NBC money, the group of student diggers (now around 12 of them) had dug almost all the way to the border between East and West Berlin. The tunnel was now looking very hi-tech, with Joachim its chief inventor. In the NBC footage you see the electric lights that he strung up, as well as the motorised cart that whizzed along the rails.

Soon the tunnellers were under the death strip, a section of land next to the wall patrolled by guards on the look-out for tunnels. "They had special listening devices that they'd put on the ground," says Joachim. "If they heard something, they'd dig a hole and fire a gun into it or throw in dynamite."

Double trouble

But it wasn't the guards that did the first bit of major damage to the tunnel: it was a leak from a burst pipe. They bucketed out gallons of water, and eventually managed to get the pipe fixed, but it would take months for the tunnel to dry out. They were now stuck: tunnellers without a tunnel. Then they heard about another tunnel which had been dug into the East, but had been abandoned by its crew. Though the diggers had left, the students organising the escape were still around. They asked Joachim and the others if they'd be up for helping. They could combine their lists of escapees and get them all through at the same time. "It seemed too perfect an opportunity to pass up," says Joachim. "We were a group of diggers without a tunnel, and here was a tunnel that needed diggers."

On 7 August 1962, they were ready to go.

The Berlin Wall

They'd dug the final few metres right up to a cottage in the East and they'd been sending out messengers to tell the escapees that the tunnel was ready. One of these messengers was a hairdresser. His name? Siegfried Uhse. Remember, he'd been asked to look for escape-helpers in the West, and he'd found some. In other words, the escape operation that Joachim was now part of was being watched by the Stasi. A Stasi file records how Siegfried Uhse told his handler the details: "The breakthrough would happen between 4pm and 7pm," he said. "One hundred people were expected." The Stasi were now onto the biggest escape operation so far from West Berlin. They sent "soldiers, an armoured personnel carrier and a water cannon" to a base near the cottage, as well as plainclothes Stasi agents. The trap was set.

Back at the tunnel, Joachim and two of the other diggers were preparing to break into the cottage. They crawled to the end of the tunnel, carrying axes, hammers, pistols and an old Second World War machine gun. As they started hacking into the cottage, escapees were arriving, ready to crawl through the tunnel. They had no idea they were surrounded by Stasi agents. One by one they were bundled into cars and driven away.

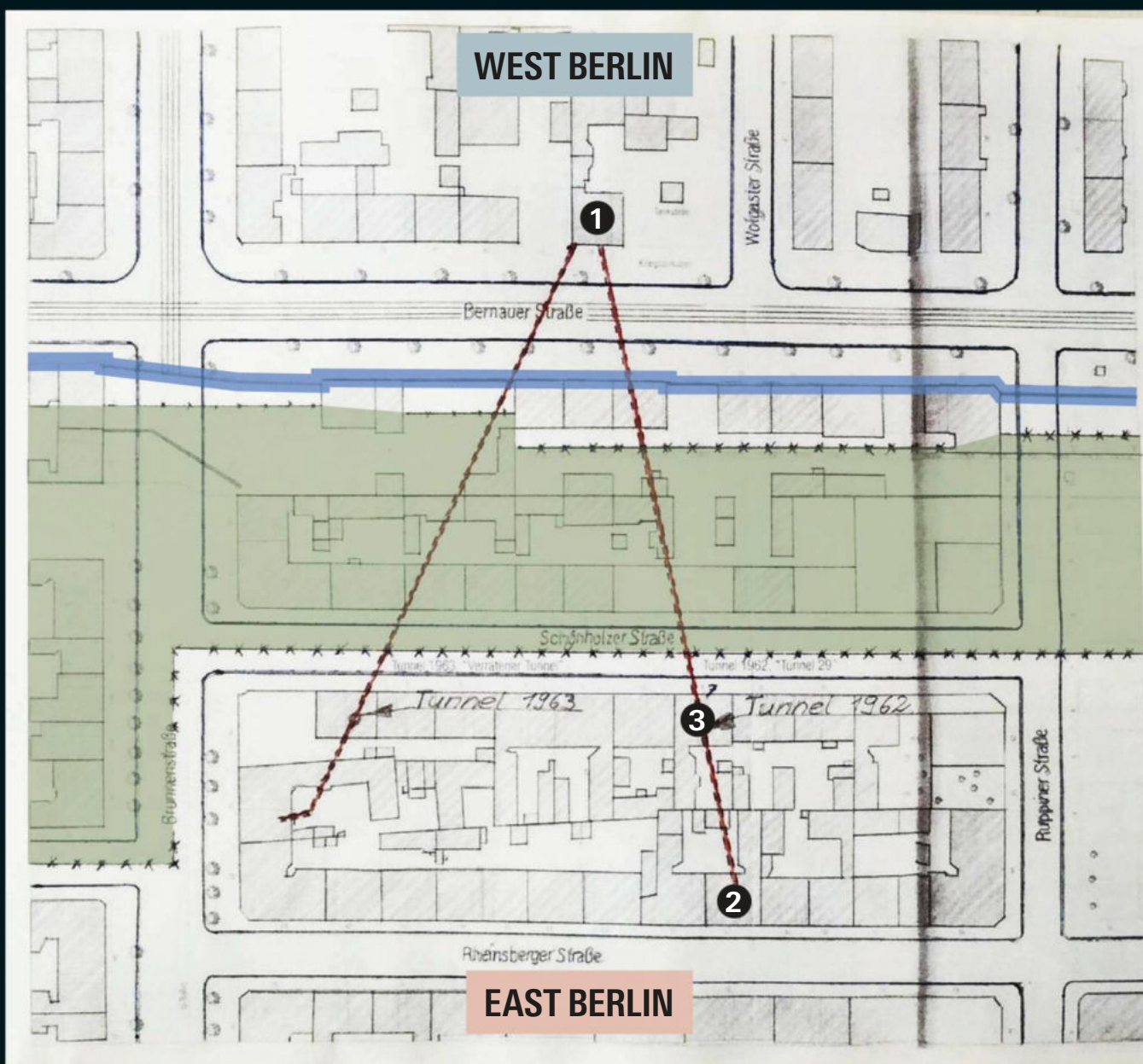
Joachim and the other two diggers were now climbing into the living room, unaware that soldiers were standing just outside the door. Stasi files from that day reveal how the soldiers were just about to burst in when they heard one of the tunnellers mention "a machine gun". They waited for back-up: their Kalashnikovs were no match for machine guns from West Germany. Then Joachim and the others heard a message over their radio, telling them the operation had been blown. They jumped down into the tunnel and started crawling back into the West. A few minutes later, the soldiers' back-up arrived and they rushed into the room, jumping down into the tunnel. It was empty; they were too late. But they weren't empty handed; they had dozens of prisoners to interrogate.

Prisoners of the Stasi

That night, everyone arrested at the tunnel was taken to Hohenschönhausen prison, a former Soviet jail now run by the Stasi. Prisoners weren't allowed to talk to each other and in their cells, they had no control over anything: the light switch was on the outside, as was the button to flush the loo. Everything was designed to make the inmates feel powerless. The transcripts of their interrogations show they were long: running more than 12 hours at a time with no food or breaks. Most of them eventually confessed, giving up the details of their part in the escape tunnel. After their show trials, many

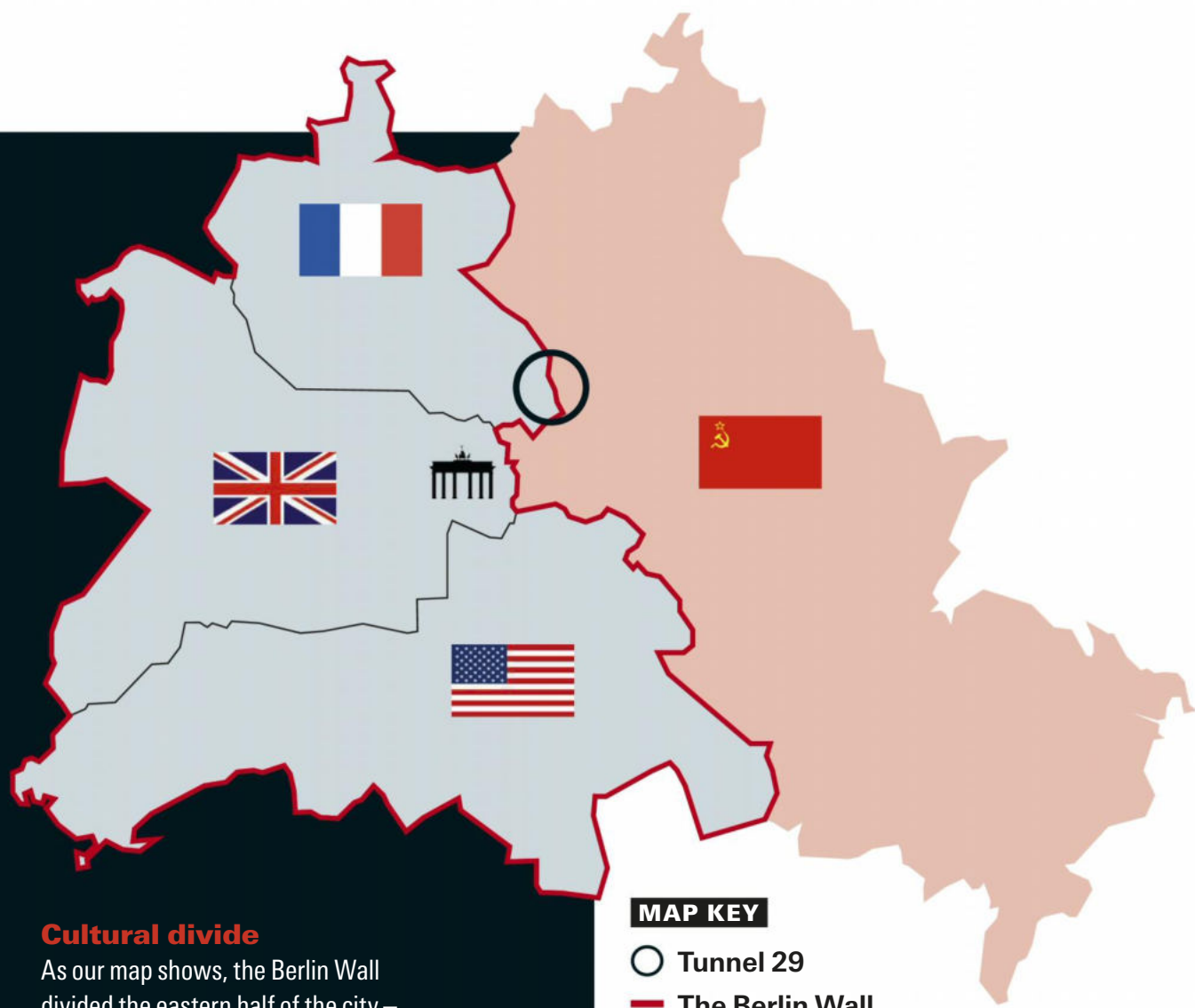
Escape route

A pre-1961 map of Berlin with the route taken by Tunnel 29 indicated by the red line, right. The tunnel started at a drinking-straw factory on Bernauer Strasse ① in West Berlin and was originally intended to emerge at Rheinsberger Strasse ② in the east of the city. However, a leak forced the tunnellers to emerge at No 7 Schonholzer Strasse ③. The Berlin Wall is marked by a blue line, and the 'death strip' – bristling with watchtowers and guard dogs – is shaded in green. The red line to the left marks a 1963 escape tunnel



Under surveillance

East German policemen peer over the Berlin Wall in 1961. At least 140 people were killed or died at the wall before it was pulled down almost three decades later



Cultural divide

As our map shows, the Berlin Wall divided the eastern half of the city – under communist control – from the half administered by the western allies

MAP KEY

○ Tunnel 29

— The Berlin Wall

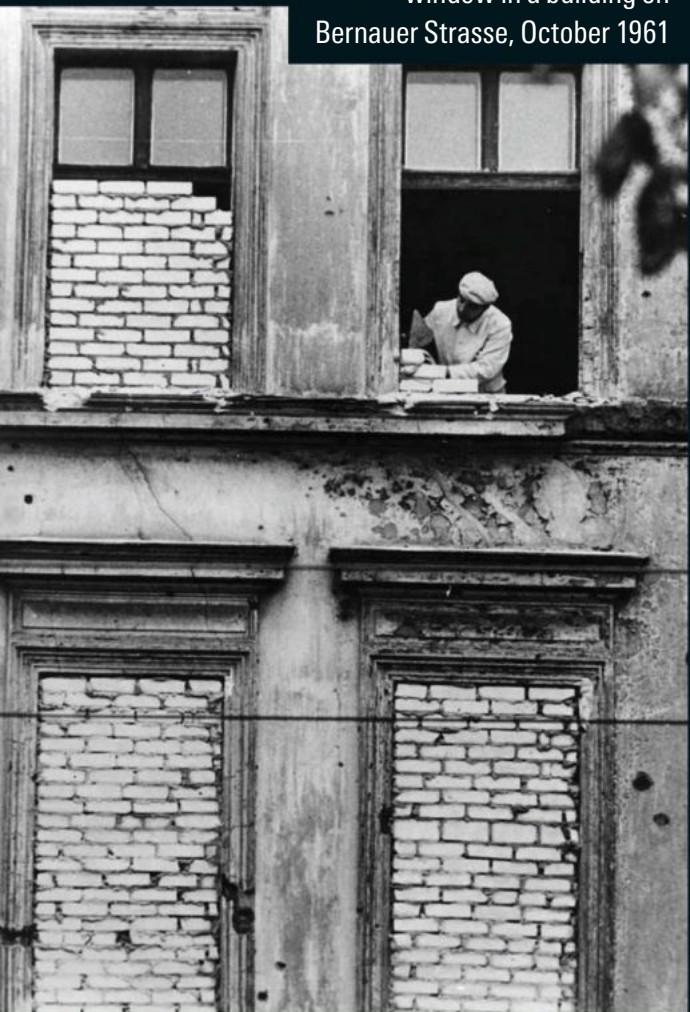
🏛️ Brandenburg Gate

of them were sent to prison, which could mean years of hard labour as well as time in solitary confinement.

Back in West Berlin, the diggers had decided to try again. By early September, the first tunnel they'd dug had dried out and so they set an escape date: 14 September 1962. That afternoon, Joachim and Hasso, one of the other diggers, crawled to the end of the tunnel and hacked a hole into the cellar of No 7 Schonholzer Strasse. Meanwhile one of the girlfriends of the diggers, a 21-year-old called Ellen Schau, had volunteered to go into the East to give out the final signals to the escapees. As a West German passport holder, she could go in and out of the East when she liked. When she got there, she had to go to three different pubs to give the signals to the escapees waiting there. In the first one, she ordered matches, in the second, she ordered water. In the third pub, she was meant to order coffee but it had run out. "It was a

Something to hide

An East German bricks up a window in a building on Bernauer Strasse, October 1961



Shoes that Eveline Schmidt's two-year-old daughter left behind her in Tunnel 29

THE ESCAPEES HAD NO IDEA THEY WERE SURROUNDED BY STASI AGENTS. THEY WERE BUNDLED INTO CARS AND DRIVEN AWAY

terrible moment," she says. "How could I give the signal if the pub didn't have any coffee?" Instead, she complained loudly about the *coffee*, and then ordered a cognac (at least they both begin with the same letter.) She just had to hope that the escapees all understood her signals: that the tunnel was ready.

Gripping their guns

As Ellen returned to West Berlin, groups of people walked towards the apartment with the tunnel underneath it. Joachim and Hasso were waiting for them in the cellar, guns in their hands. Just after 6pm, they heard footsteps. "We stood there, hardly breathing, gripping our guns tightly," says Joachim. The door opened and there was a woman, Eveline Schmidt. She was with her husband and their two-year-old daughter. "It was dark," remembers Eveline. "There was just one lamp by the entrance. One of the tunnellers took my baby and then I started crawling."

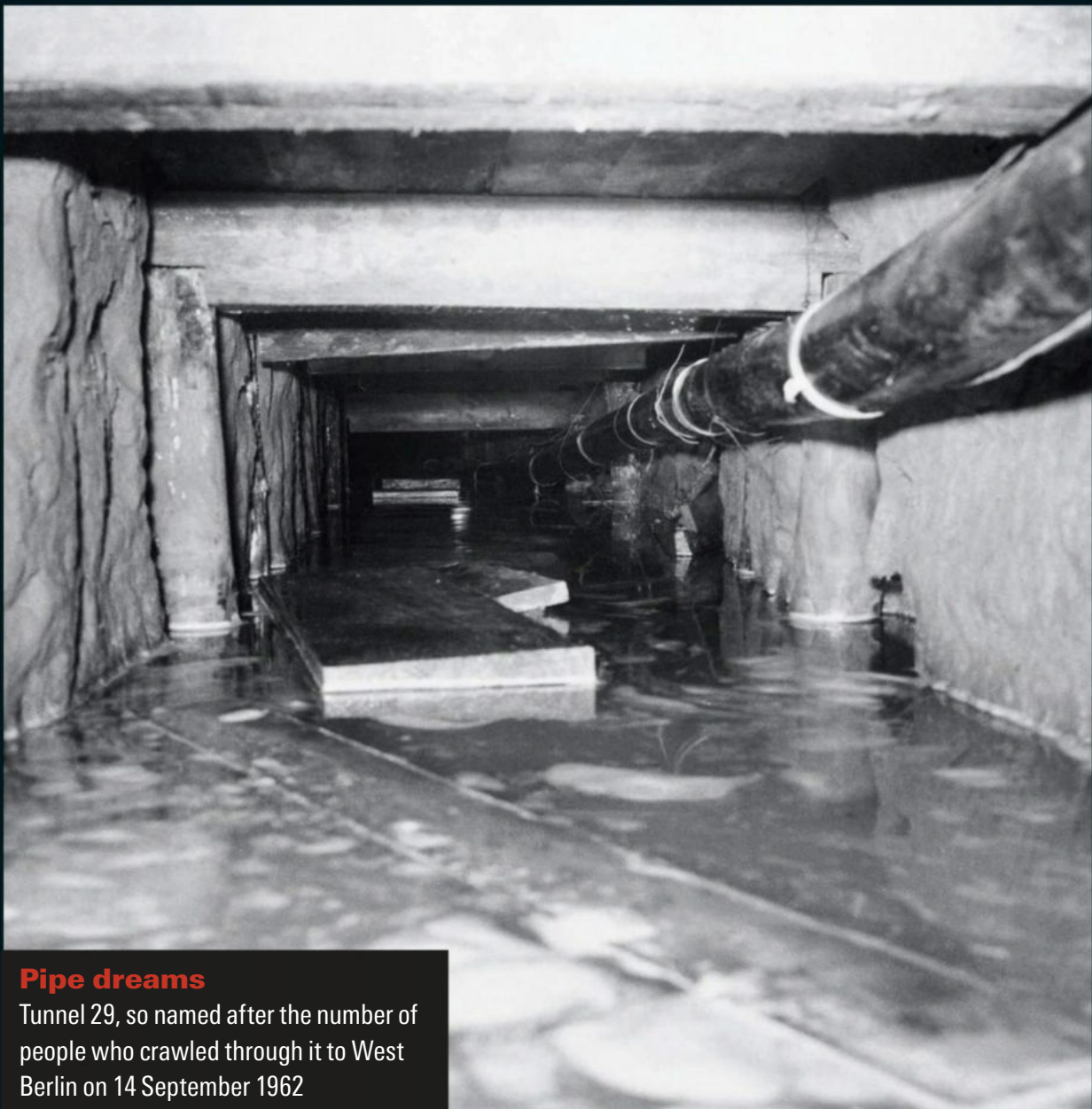
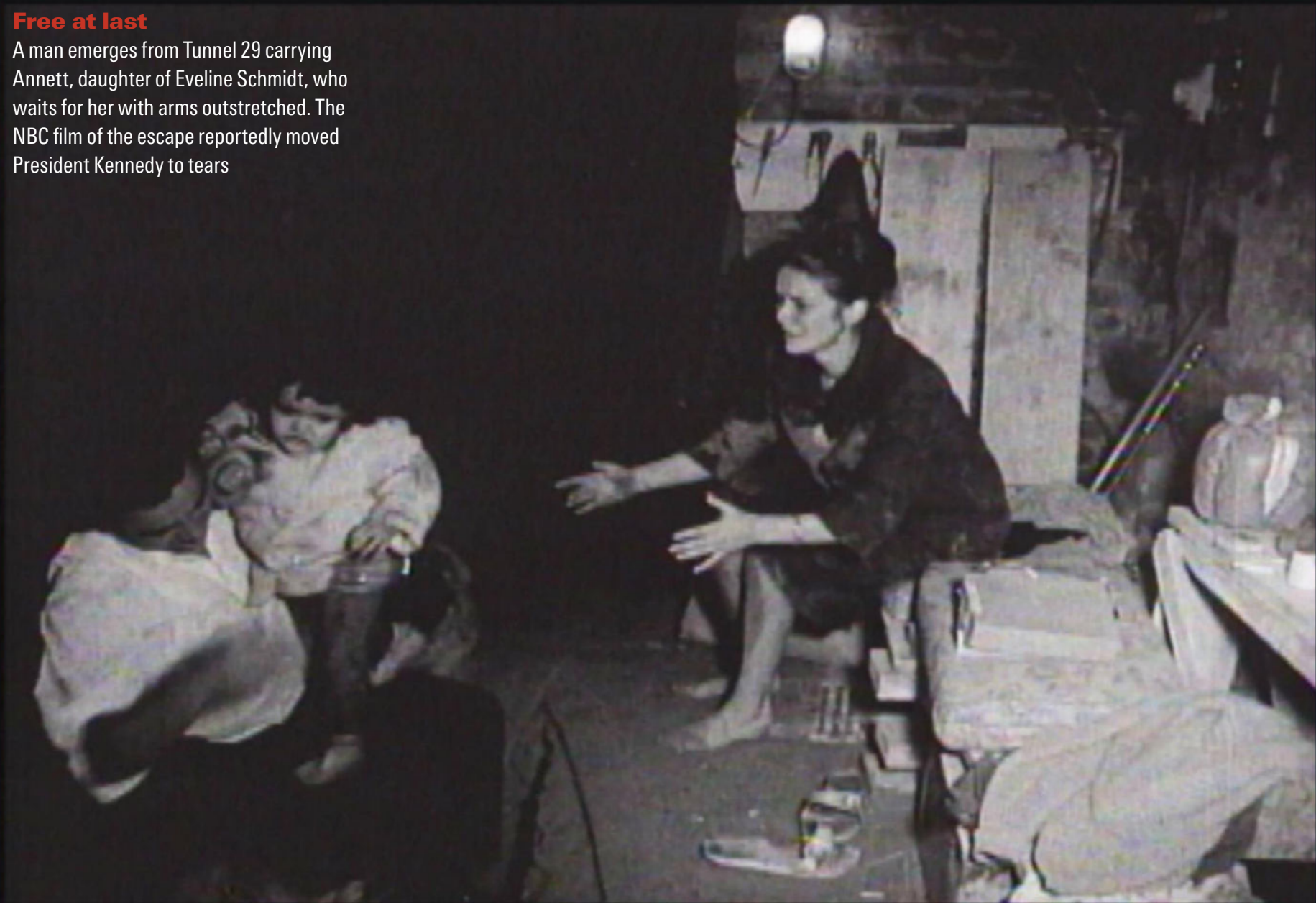
At the other end, in the West, the two-man NBC film crew were standing at the top of the shaft that led to the tunnel. When you look at the footage, for a long time you see nothing: and then a white handbag appears. Then there's a hand, and then, finally, you see Eveline. She's covered in mud and barefoot. She's lost her shoes in the tunnel. It's taken her 12 minutes to crawl through. As she reaches the top of the ladder, she collapses. One of the NBC cameramen helps her to a bench and then a tunneller brings her child to her. She bundles her into her arms, nuzzling the nape of her neck.

Over the next hour, more people come through the tunnel: the diggers' friends and family. One of them, Claus, a butcher who'd escaped from the East, helps a woman through, only to realise it's his wife, Inge. He hasn't seen her since they were separated while escaping a year ago. She was caught by border guards and imprisoned while pregnant with his child. Then Claus hears a noise from the tunnel: it's a baby, dressed in white, carried by one of the tunnellers. He's only five

The Berlin Wall

Free at last

A man emerges from Tunnel 29 carrying Annett, daughter of Eveline Schmidt, who waits for her with arms outstretched. The NBC film of the escape reportedly moved President Kennedy to tears



Pipe dreams

Tunnel 29, so named after the number of people who crawled through it to West Berlin on 14 September 1962



Tunnel of love

Joachim Rudolph marries Eveline Schmidt 10 years after helping her escape from East Berlin

months old. It's his son, born in a communist prison camp. Claus takes him in his arms, holding him for the first time.

Back at the other end of the tunnel, Joachim is still in the cellar. He's stayed there, at the most dangerous point of the tunnel till the very end. Twenty-nine people have made it through and he knows it's time to go. "So many things went through my head," he says. "All the things we'd gone through digging it. The leaks, the electric shocks, the mud, the blisters on our hands. Seeing all those refugees come through, I felt the most incredible happiness." There's one final bit of footage from that night: the escapees walk, one by one, to the door. They push it open and disappear into West Berlin.

But that's not the end of the story. A few months later, the documentary aired on NBC. Although President Kennedy's White House tried to block it (fearing a diplomatic incident with the US), Reuven Frank persuaded the network to run it and 18 million people tuned in. It was described as "without parallel" in television history. The tunnellers heard that Kennedy himself watched it and that he was moved to tears. Some of the diggers then went on to build other tunnels (including the Channel Tunnel), and in the East, Siegfried Uhse was given one of the Stasi's top medals for infiltrating the tunnel.

What, then, about Joachim? A few years after the escape, he fell in love with Eveline, the first woman who came through the tunnel. Her marriage had broken up and they fell for each other. Ten years after he rescued her, he married her. On the wall of their apartment today, there's a pair of shoes that he found in the tunnel after everyone had gone home. They belonged to Annett, Eveline's daughter. And so the tunnel that Joachim built, which brought 29 refugees from the East, also brought him a family.

Before it was pulled down 30 years ago – on 9 November 1989 – at least 140 people were killed or died at the Berlin Wall. But while the wall has gone, the idea hasn't. Right now, all over the world, walls are being built, not just in the United States, but in India, Turkey, Morocco, Norway. The reasons for building them are different. But Joachim says there's one thing they have in common. "Wherever there's a wall, people will try to get over it – or under it." **H**

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Helena Merriman is a journalist and broadcaster. She is the presenter of the 10 part BBC Radio 4 series *Tunnel 29*, which airs in late October

READ Look out for issue 19 of our sister magazine *BBC World Histories*, which will be telling the story of life behind the Berlin Wall.
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GREAT ESCAPES

Five other audacious bids to flee East Germany

High-wire act

Horst Klein was a trapeze artist living in East Berlin. He'd been banned from performing (for being anti-communist) and in 1962, he told a local newspaper that "he couldn't live any longer without the smell of a circus". In December 1962, he climbed an electricity pole near the wall and made his way onto a cable, hanging on it from both arms. Steadily, he inched his way into the West, moving one hand over the other. Just as he made it over the border, his arms gave way and he fell from the cable, breaking both his arms. But he recovered and performed again.

Booze cruise

On 7 June 1962, 13 young East Berliners boarded an excursion boat. They'd brought alcohol with them for a "party", and they plied the captain and mechanic with it until they passed out. The group then locked them in a cabin and hijacked the boat. They steered it towards West Berlin, under machine gun fire from East German border guards. When it reached the riverbank, West Berlin policemen fired shots back into the East to protect the group, and under that cover, the escapees jumped ashore.

Armoured breakout

On 17 April 1963, 19-year old Wolfgang Engels climbed into a stolen Soviet armoured personnel carrier and drove it to the border between East and West Berlin. He tried to smash it through the wall, but the vehicle got stuck in the barbed wire. As he lay there, trapped, an East German border guard approached him. Wolfgang pleaded "don't shoot!" but the border guard shot him anyway. "The bullet went in through my back and out the front," he said. Incredibly, Wolfgang Engels managed to climb out of the car, over the bonnet and into the West. He was severely injured, but he'd escaped.

Runaway train

Harry Deterling was a train engineer. He lived in East Berlin with his wife, Ingrid, and their four sons and he'd wanted to escape ever since the wall went up. He'd heard that there were some train lines that still connected to the West but that they were soon to be dismantled, so he knew he had to act fast. In December 1961, he told his bosses he wanted to run an extra train to improve his engineering skills. They said yes, and at 7.33pm on 5 December (his birthday), he, his family and some friends boarded locomotive 234 and Harry then steered it onto a disused track. There were 32 passengers – not all of them would-be escapees. At 8:50pm, he drove the train past Albrechtshof, the last station in East Berlin, without stopping, then disconnected the safety brake. A few minutes later, the train and its passengers crossed the border into the West. The next day that railway line was cut off.

Up, up and away

One night, Hans Strelczyk, a former aircraft mechanic, was watching a TV programme about the history of ballooning. It gave him an idea. He'd long wanted to escape East Germany: perhaps this could be the way? With his friend Gunter Wetzel, he built a hot-air balloon engine from four old propane cylinders. Their wives stitched the balloon together out of pieces of old canvas and bedsheets. On 16 September 1979 the two couples and their four children floated over the border at 2,400 metres. They landed in Bavaria in a blackberry thicket.



A scene from the 1982 film *Night Crossing*, which dramatised Hans Strelczyk's epic escape bid in a balloon

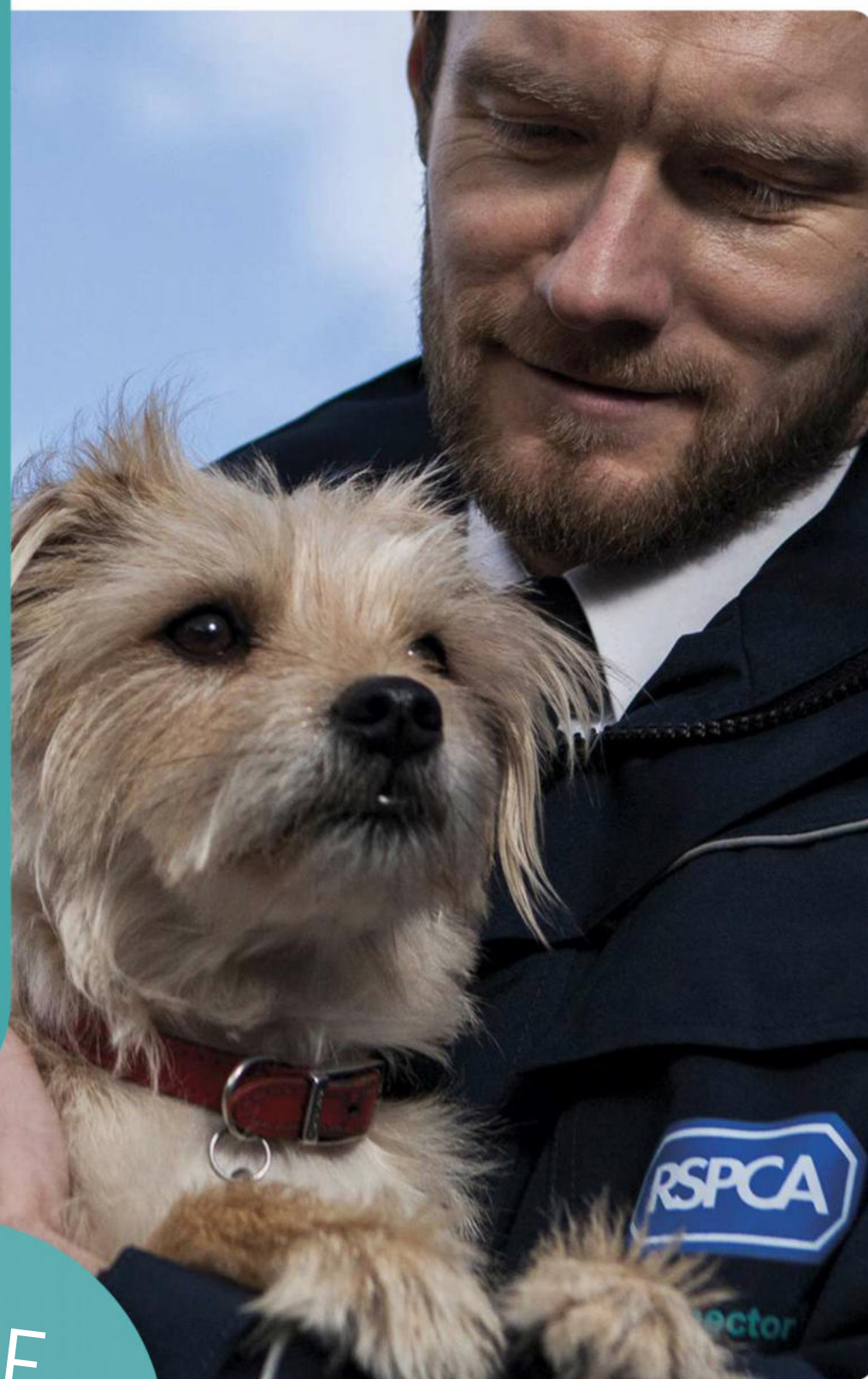


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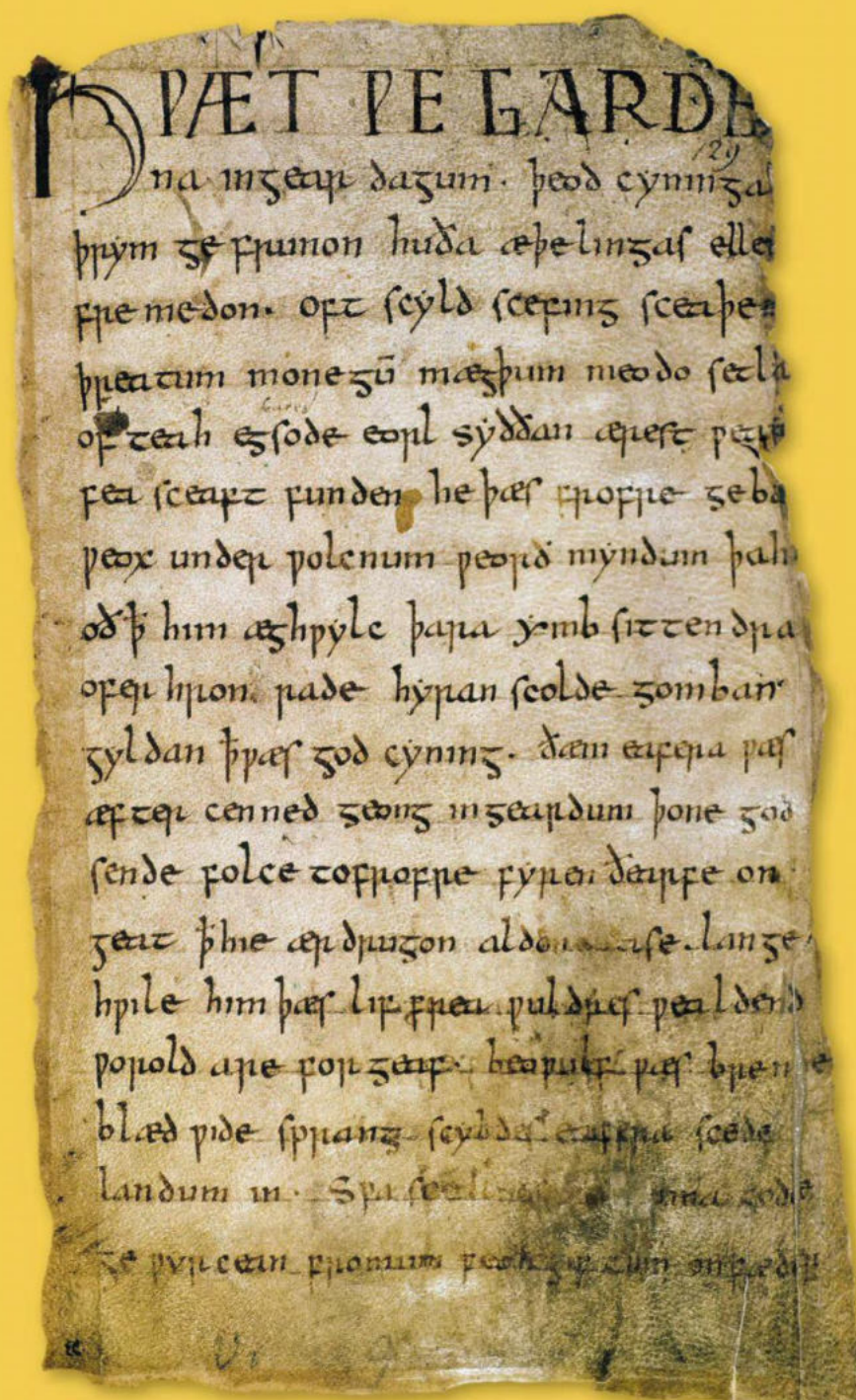
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Leaving a Legacy

It's the ultimate Anglo-Saxon epic: a mighty tale of war, vengeance and monster-battling which, a millennium later, inspired *The Lord of the Rings*. But how far is it rooted in history?

Eleanor Parker answers key questions on

BEOWULF



Giant of literature

A page from the *Beowulf* manuscript.

The story is fictional but some of the characters within it were real people, and others were believed to be the ancestors of Anglo-Saxon and Danish kings

Beowulf

Beowulf is an epic tale that continues to fire the imaginations of readers a millennium after it was written. Why is the poem still so relevant today?

Since it was first translated into modern English in the 19th century, *Beowulf* has become by far the best-known piece of Anglo-Saxon literature. It has inspired movies, novels and even comic books; there seems to be no limit to the ways the story can be reimagined. Furthermore, it was perhaps the single greatest formative influence on JRR Tolkien, which means it has played a huge part in the development of the modern fantasy genre, from *The Lord of the Rings* right through to *Game of Thrones*.

When and where was *Beowulf* written?

The short answer is we don't know, other than that it was in Anglo-Saxon England. The dating and origins of *Beowulf* are much discussed but still unresolved, though many theories have been put forward. We know the poem was set down in a manuscript around AD 1000, and was probably first composed many years earlier – perhaps as early as the eighth century. Some aspects of it might also have existed in oral tradition before the text reached its surviving form, but we can only speculate about that.

What happens in the poem?

Beowulf is set in early medieval Denmark and Sweden around the sixth century AD. The story begins with a king of the Danes, Hrothgar, whose royal hall is being attacked by a monster, a shadowy fen-dwelling creature named Grendel. The monster is enraged by the sound of mirth in the hall, and comes at night to capture and eat Hrothgar's men. Hrothgar, an old, respected king, is in despair, until a young warrior turns up from across the sea to offer help in defeating the intruder. He is Beowulf, a Geat (the Geats lived in what is now southern Sweden), and he wants to prove himself by taking on this challenge.

Lying in wait by night in the hall, Beowulf surprises Grendel, wrestling the demon and tearing off its arm with his bare hands. The wounded creature retreats, and everyone thinks the threat is over – but they are celebrating too soon. Grendel's mother comes next, thirsting to avenge the harm done to her son, and this time Beowulf has to descend into her watery lair to fight her. After a vicious struggle he manages to triumph, rescuing Hrothgar and his people.

Triumphant, Beowulf returns to his home laden with rewards from a grateful Hrothgar. He

Good things come to those who hwæt

Beowulf exists in a single manuscript, which – after surviving a period of obscurity, and a fire in the 18th century – now resides in the British Library. It has been translated more than 300 times



eventually becomes king there, but after many years he faces another threat, this time to his own people, in the shape of a dragon. Though now an old man, Beowulf decides to take on the dragon himself and succeeds in killing it and winning its treasure. But in doing so he is also slain. The poem ends with his funeral and the grief of his people at the loss of their beloved king.

Is *Beowulf* based on real historical events?

The poem's main story – of Beowulf and the monsters he fights – is of course fictional, but some of the people it mentions were real figures. Beowulf is said to be related to a Geatish king named Hygelac, who is known from other sources to have lived in the early sixth century. Beowulf himself does not

appear in any other texts, but many of the other characters feature in semi-legendary histories and sagas about medieval Scandinavia, while some were also considered to be the ancestors of Anglo-Saxon and Danish kings.

And, of course, the peoples mentioned in the poem – the Danes, Geats and Swedes – are very much real. Though the story

contains fantastical elements, it takes place in the real world, in a fairly well-defined historical period, which makes it a compelling mixture of history and legend.

Why might the poem have entertained an Anglo-Saxon audience?

The story itself has a powerful appeal, with the tension of the fights with the monsters, the poignancy of Beowulf's death and the relationships between the characters. The poem's language is also beautifully lyrical, with evocative descriptions of the mead hall, Beowulf's sea journeys and the dragon's treasure hoard.

But *Beowulf* is not just an exciting and well-told story. It explores themes that are widespread in Anglo-Saxon literature, such as the human experience of time and loss, both within individual lives and collectively, across centuries. It celebrates and critiques the glamour and danger of a masculine warrior society, where violent deeds can win glory but also cause terrible harm.

A key aspect of the poem's appeal to an Anglo-Saxon audience would have been its historical and geographical setting. Many Anglo-Saxon elites believed they were descended from settlers who had come to

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Brute force

Beowulf rips the arm off Grendel the monster in the hall of Hrothgar, king of the Danes, in this artistic depiction



Flight of fantasy

ABOVE: Modern genre works like George RR Martin's *Game of Thrones* can claim direct descent from the Anglo-Saxon epic
RIGHT: Ray Winstone starred as Beowulf in a 2007 3D live-action/computer-animated film of the poem



England from the very parts of northern Europe where *Beowulf* takes place, around the time the poem is set. Whether or not this was true, it was a culturally important myth, and it probably meant *Beowulf* was understood to be in some sense a story about the ancestors of the poet and his audience.

What happened to *Beowulf* after the Anglo-Saxon period?

We simply don't know. We don't have any evidence to show that *Beowulf* was known at all between the Anglo-Saxon era and the 16th century. The manuscript surfaced in the Elizabethan era, bounced around the collections of a few antiquities scholars, and was damaged in a library fire in 1731.

The first complete translation into modern English was by John Mitchell Kemble in 1837. Scholars immediately recognised the poem's importance and were keen to pronounce it an epic of English literature, but many did not know what to make of it: some were puzzled by its allusive, digressive style, while others criticised its mixing of legend and history. Though intensively studied by Victorian scholars, it did not become widely read by non-specialists until the 20th century.

A key turning-point was the champion-

ship of JRR Tolkien, whose 1936 lecture *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics* trumpeted its literary value. Meanwhile, the poem's dragon and treasure-hoard, its evocation of a lost past, and its elegiac tone had a profound influence on Tolkien's own imagination as he wrote *The Lord of the Rings*. In the second half of the 20th century, translations by well-known writers such as Seamus Heaney brought the poem to a wider audience. Though it was slow to gain popularity, *Beowulf* has now been translated more than 300 times. Its manuscript is housed in the British Library.

What can *Beowulf* tell us about Anglo-Saxon culture?

In some ways, the poem is describing a society that had already passed away by the time it was written, so we have to be careful in using it as evidence for Anglo-Saxon England. The poet was deliberately writing about a time and place distant from his own society, so what he describes is largely based on his imagining of long-ago Scandinavia, not contemporary Anglo-Saxon England.

However, there are aspects of the world of *Beowulf* that do seem closely related to Anglo-Saxon life. Many of its descriptions

Though the story is fantastical, it takes place in the real world – it's a compelling mix of fact and legend



Vivid imagination

The manuscript that contains *Beowulf* was compiled around AD 1000. This page is taken from one of the other texts contained within that manuscript

of material culture – ships, rich burials, inscribed swords, elaborately decorated royal halls – have been confirmed by modern archaeological discoveries such as Sutton Hoo and the Staffordshire Hoard. They would perhaps already have been archaic by the time the poem was written, but it suggests the poet was careful to get the details right. In the poem, these items play a role by creating a tangible sense of the past, in which weapons and items of treasure carry with them their own names, legends and history.

Is *Beowulf* linked to any other early medieval legends?

The story has features that are also found in medieval Scandinavian literature. ‘Beowulf’ probably means ‘bee-wolf’ – a poetic word for ‘bear’ – and stories about bear-human warriors who fight monsters appear elsewhere in medieval Norse and English literature.

The poem frequently alludes to other stories from Germanic legend. While we can identify some of these legends from other sources, some are now mysterious to us – though they must have been familiar to the poet’s audience. *Beowulf* begins by telling the story of Scyld Scefing, a legendary ancestor of Danish and English kings who, as a child, was found drifting alone in a boat, before growing up to become a great king. The poem recounts how, after his death, Scyld was sent out to sea again in a ship laden with treasure, though “no one can say who received that cargo”. We are being encouraged to compare Scyld with Beowulf – the two funerals bookend the poem, and the same judgment is made on both: *þæt wæs god cyning* (“that was a good king”). We are perhaps being asked to decide for ourselves what it means to be a ‘good king’ in this kind of society.

Sometimes it is characters within the poem who make allusions to other legends, suggesting a culture in which oral tradition and historical parallels are highly prized. For example, Hrothgar warns Beowulf not to be like the wicked king Heremod, whose anger and arrogance almost destroyed his people. These are characters who are conscious of their own place in history and are trying to learn from its stories.

When the Danes are celebrating Beowulf’s victory over Grendel, a poet at Hrothgar’s court praises the warrior by comparing him to Sigemund, a great hero from Germanic legend. In this poem within a poem, we are told how Sigemund famously killed a dragon, which seems to hint to the audience what awaits Beowulf many years later. The poet is said to be “a man full of glorious words, with



National treasure

A seventh-century helmet from Sutton Hoo. *Beowulf* tells of the Anglo-Saxons’ Scandinavian forebears

The poem meditates on the limitations of human power, especially on the fact that it all must come to an end. Even great heroes die

a memory for stories, who remembered a great many old legends and told them in new words”; this could easily be a description of the author of *Beowulf* himself.

All of these allusions produce the impression of a rich and colourful tapestry of ancient legends, in which Beowulf’s story is just one thread.

Does the poem have a particular philosophy or mindset?

Perhaps surprisingly for a story about warriors and monsters, *Beowulf* is a profoundly philosophical poem. It explores the ethics of kingship and the behaviour of

warriors. Bad rulers oppress their people, put their own interests first and are tyrannical; good rulers are generous and prudent, and take time to reflect on their decisions. We are shown that warriors ought to be brave but not reckless, loyal to their companions and true to their promises.

In reflecting on these stories of warriors and kings, *Beowulf* is interested in different kinds of power, and exploring how physical strength, mental determination and political sovereignty should each best be used. The poem also meditates on the limitations of human power, especially on the fact that it all must come to an end. Even great heroes die. Beowulf has the strength of 30 men and becomes a mighty king, but he is still only human. He doesn’t have power over the natural world or the seasons, or over death. Since earthly power is restricted in this way, human rulers need to learn to understand their own limits and act wisely within them.

Is there a religious message wrapped up in the story?

It’s important to understand that *Beowulf* is a Christian poem about pagan characters. It’s set in a period before the Scandinavian peoples had converted to Christianity, but the poet and his audience were themselves Christians. Despite this, the poet is sympathetic towards his pagan characters.

Beowulf strikes a delicate balance. The characters we are meant to admire, including the hero, express beliefs about God that would not be alien to Christian thought: they are presented as believing not in the Norse pantheon of gods (as we might expect) but in a single, all-powerful creator who governs world events. “God, the guardian of glory, may ever work wonder after wonder,” says Hrothgar after Beowulf’s victory. An Anglo-Saxon Christian audience would have recognised and felt sympathy for these ideas. But at the same time, the poem is clear that the characters are still pagans and cannot hope for Christian salvation.

The story is given added poignancy by the fact that, when Beowulf dies, it really is the end; his body is turned to smoke on his funeral pyre. The only afterlife he can hope for is to be remembered by his people. **H**

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LISTEN AGAIN To hear Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss *Beowulf* on Radio 4’s *In Our Time*, go to bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0542xt7



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Seismic splits

This map from c1659 shows blood being spilled across the British Isles during the Civil Wars. Charles II's agenda for restoring order to his kingdoms was a cocktail of pragmatism, compromise and brutality

Putting the realm back together

Brexit may be exposing deep rifts in society but this isn't the first time that the British Isles have been convulsed by rancour and discord. **Kate Loveman** describes Charles II's attempts to reunite his divided kingdoms in the wake of the Civil Wars

On 22 April 1661, Charles II made his formal entrance into London for his coronation. At a triumphal arch set up for the pageant to celebrate his restoration to the English throne, he was halted by a figure dressed as the character of Rebellion. She was accompanied by her henchwoman Confusion who, appropriately, had her clothes on back to front. Rebellion introduced herself as “Hell’s Daughter, Satan’s Eldest Child” and gloated over the chaos she had brought during the Civil Wars. She was promptly banished by a richly dressed figure, Monarchy, and her sidekick, Loyalty. Monarchy invited Charles to enter the city in joy and safety, declaring herself the best form of government and the resolution of strife.

In early 1660, just over a year before this scene was performed, the prospect of an end to turmoil had seemed remote. As the Essex clergyman Ralph Josselin reflected in his diary, the world appeared “nothing but confusions”. Since the late 1630s, England, Scotland and Ireland had experienced uprisings and a series of bitter Civil Wars. The most recent “confusions” included an unsuccessful military coup, along with riots in London and other cities.

Not only had order deteriorated, but the institutions by which order might be achieved – the monarchy, parliament, or the army – all appeared to have failed. Given the breakdown of government, how would it be possible to find a way forward that commanded support? And if a way forward was identified, how could the people of three divided nations be brought together – at least enough to ensure some measure of long-term stability?

The Civil Wars had begun, nearly 20 years earlier, over Charles I’s attempts to impose his

policies on his reluctant subjects, with his religious reforms provoking particular anger. Charles disregarded the traditional checks on the king’s power (such as consulting parliament) and resorted to military force, declaring war against the English parliament in 1642. Wars engulfed the three kingdoms. In England, the army intervened in government and purged from parliament those MPs who wanted to continue negotiations with Charles. In 1649, divisions were further entrenched when the army and the MPs who remained in Westminster orchestrated the trial and execution of the king for treason against his people. The execution did not just horrify royalists, but also alienated many of those who had fought for parliament.

Growing turmoil

The 1650s saw a series of experiments in republican government as factions in the English parliament and the army struggled for control. Scotland and Ireland were subdued by Oliver Cromwell’s forces.

As well as the tensions that had prompted the wars, a whole host of other issues were now fuelling strife, among them the distribution of property seized during the wars, payments owing to soldiers, and the balance of power between the army and parliament.

In early 1660, the Rump parliament was nominally in power. The Rump was so called because it was the remainder of the MPs, elected in 1640, who had overseen the execution of Charles I: its less than flattering name was a sign of the lack of esteem in which it was now held. Many constituencies had no MP left to speak for them and the parliament was widely seen as unrepresentative. Thomas Rugg, a London barber, wrote in his journal: “The nation was much in perplexity for want of a government that would doe just and good things, for the

The institutions by which order might be achieved – monarchy, parliament, the army – all appeared to have failed

parliament did not please the people.”

The people whom the parliament did not please included London’s apprentices. Earlier in the winter, when a group of army officers had seized power, the apprentices had petitioned for a “free parliament” (meaning new elections without restrictions) or else the readmission to parliament of the moderate MPs who had been prevented from sitting for years. Public support for a “free parliament” was strengthened when the army shot and killed protesters on 5 December 1659.

Although the army returned control to the Rump parliament, this did not end the protests. The apprentices’ tactics included inventive attacks on Colonel Hewson, whom they blamed for the shootings. Rugg recorded in January that the apprentices used the cold winter to engage in satire-by-snowman: “The yonge men in Fleet Street and likewise in St Pauls churchyard made in snowe the effigies of Colonell Hewson, with one eye in [his] heade, and with an old face.”

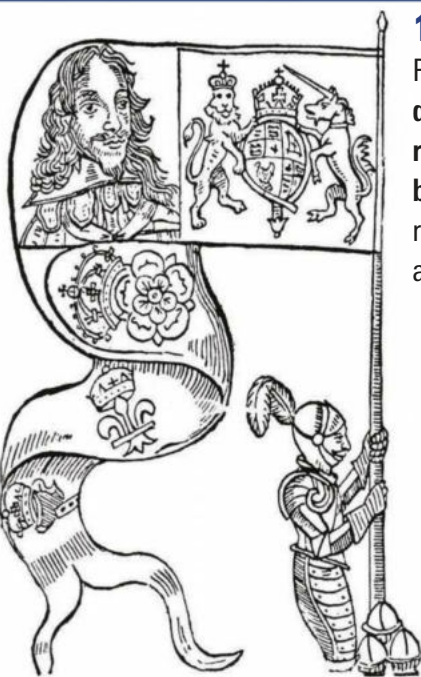
London’s Common Council, the city’s elected governing body, chose to side with the protesters against the Rump. Representatives of counties, members of guilds, and groups of ‘gentlemen’ all made their views known by sending petitions to the parliament or to army leaders, and by having these documents

TIMELINE From Civil War to the Restoration

22 August 1642

King Charles I raises his standard at Nottingham, formally declaring war on the forces of parliament.

The king raises his standard, ushering in 18 years of chaos



14 June 1645

Parliamentary forces decisively defeat a royalist army at the battle of Naseby. The royalist cause now appears all but lost.

4 January 1649

With MPs who were in favour of negotiating with the king now expelled, the ‘Rump parliament’ assumes supreme power.

30 January 1649

After being tried for high treason, King Charles I is executed outside Whitehall Palace in Westminster.

3 September 1651

Oliver Cromwell defeats Charles II at the battle of Worcester. Charles is forced to flee abroad.

Charles I loses his head at Whitehall, as depicted in a woodcut





Root and branch revolution Oliver Cromwell (left) orders his men to pull down the 'Royal Oak of Britain', as depicted in a contemporary illustration. By the late 1650s – as soldiers demanded their wages, governments fell and protesters were shot in the streets – many people craved stability

16 December 1653

Oliver Cromwell becomes **Lord Protector and head of state.**



3 September 1658

Cromwell dies. A series of brief regimes, including the reinstalled Rump parliament, struggle to maintain order. **Support for a return to monarchy grows.**

Samuel Cooper's portrait of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector from 1653–58

11 February 1660

Powerful general George Monck demands that parliament holds new elections. This signals the end of the Rump parliament's grip on power.

4 April 1660

From his exile in the Netherlands, **Charles II** issues the **declaration of Breda**, offering his "loving subjects" a free pardon for crimes against himself and his father.

Charles II's coronation crowned a remarkable few months for the British Isles

8 May 1660

Charles II is proclaimed king of England, amid widespread celebrations.





printed for others to see. Many of the petitions were addressed to the most powerful general, George Monck, who was marching his forces from Scotland towards London, his intentions unclear.

On arriving in the capital, Monck at first showed signs of siding with the Rump and followed parliament's orders to arrest its opponents. However, on 11 February, Monck suddenly changed his position and demanded that parliament speedily hold new elections. In a letter to the Rump, he stated that the strength of feeling among "the generality of the nation" (a reference to the declarations sent to him from around the country) had shown him that there was no other way "to keep the nation in peace". That night saw rejoicing in the city, for the immediate threat of armed conflict was averted. The first steps on a road to resolution had been taken, with new elections offering a chance to install an authoritative, representative parliament.

Charles, George or Richard?

The Rump had fallen but, still, the restoration of Charles II was not inevitable. Some of those who had demanded a new parliament had done so because it was too risky to call openly for a return to monarchy. However, for other campaigners the call for a new parliament to settle the government had meant just that. Now people in and outside

parliament were debating what might come next. In early March 1660, Samuel Pepys, a junior government clerk, recorded in his diary: "Great is the talk of a single person, and that it would now be Charles, George or Richard again" – meaning that the next head of state would be Charles II, George Monck or Oliver Cromwell's son Richard (who had ruled as 'Lord Protector' in 1658–59). As the momentum gathered behind Charles, observers judged that much of this support was pragmatic and born out of motives such as a desire to end uncertainty. Ralph Josselin noted cynically that the nation had been "looking more to Charles Stuart" but "out of love to themselves not him".

Charles Stuart, who had been living in exile in the Netherlands, now seized the

opportunity to present himself as a unifying figure – indeed as the only plausible solution to strife in the three kingdoms. In April, he issued a declaration from Breda in the Netherlands. In it, he offered his "loving subjects" a free pardon for crimes against himself and his father, with parliament to decide who would be denied this mercy.

To reassure people who feared that Charles's return would mean strict laws on religious worship, he announced "a liberty to tender consciences". This was understood to mean that those who chose to worship outside a national church would not suffer for it. Parliament, he said, could determine the details of the religious settlement. He also deferred to parliament in issues such as determining contested rights to land. Charles appeared the opposite of his father: a king who would honour parliament's authority.

Charles's well-timed set of pledges found a receptive audience in the new parliament, which met at the end of April. On receiving Charles's declaration on 1 May, the House of Commons resolved the same day to re-establish the monarchy. Amid great celebrations, Charles II was proclaimed king in London on 8 May 1660. It was an event that would have seemed incredible just a few months before and that struck observers as "miraculous". For Charles, the events of early 1660 were, however, the easy bit. The king now had to

Charles cannily deflected criticism by delegating the most controversial decisions to his MPs



Pomp and circumstance

Charles II processes from the Tower of London to Westminster on the eve of his coronation

make good on his promises and show that he was capable of unifying the people.

Both sides covered

Charles's initial steps augured well for future stability. He chose as his advisors men who had served on different sides of the conflict: his privy council included both long-term royalists and members who had worked for the republican regimes of the 1650s. He held good on his pledge to allow parliament to legislate on pardons, on the ownership of property seized in the wars, and on the religious settlement. Delegating these issues to MPs showed his people that he wished to rule by consent but it also, usefully, deflected criticism by leaving the most controversial decisions to others. In summer 1660, parliament agreed the Act of Oblivion and Indemnity, a general pardon for offences committed during the wars, which was intended to "bury all seeds of future discord".

The new regime sought to foster unity through displays of mercy but also by curtailing freedoms and punishing opposition. Popular politics had led to Charles's restoration. Yet popular politics were now a potential threat to him. And so, in July 1660 Charles's privy council ordered the suppression of any newspapers that were not controlled by the government. It was the start of a series of actions designed to restrict the



An unlikely royalist

George Monck in a 1665–66 portrait. The leading republican general's surprising decision not to prop up the Rump parliament paved the way for Charles II's return



Gruesome spectacle Leading Fifth Monarchists are put to death. These religious radicals terrified Londoners when they instigated a four-day uprising in 1661

circulation of domestic news in print. In another pre-emptive step, an act was passed in 1661 against “tumultuous” petitions to the king and parliament about grievances. Any petitions with more than 20 signatories now had to have the consent of three Justices of the Peace to be legal, and only 10 people – no large crowds – could appear to present them.

Bloody vengeance

Along with legal steps to counter new dissent, the early 1660s was also a time when old opponents were hunted down. Forty-nine men had been wholly exempted by parliament from the general pardon because of their involvement in the trial and execution of Charles I. In 1660, 10 of this group were executed, with most suffering the traditional traitor’s death of being hanged, drawn and quartered. This provided the kind of retributive justice that many people who had suffered in the wars demanded. It also brutally asserted the power of the restored monarchy. By the end of the year, the heads and quarters of nine men who had participated in the death of Charles I were exhibited on gates and major buildings around the capital.

In January 1661, there were more gruesome spectacles to show what happened to enemies of the king and the public peace. A band of Fifth Monarchists under Thomas Venner staged an uprising against earthly monarchy, shouting that their allegiance was to “King Jesus, and the heads upon the gates”. Londoners were

The heads and limbs of Fifth Monarchists soon joined those of the regicides on display around London

appalled and did not join them; the heads of Fifth Monarchists soon joined those of the regicides and other criminals. The merchant Peter Mundy did the maths for one location, noting that: “Eleven heads were set on London Bridge, so that at present there were 21 heads stuck on poles.”

Venner’s small group had terrified the capital for four days, but this rising ultimately strengthened Charles’s regime. To most, it was a reminder of the dangers of unrest and served to increase distrust of Protestant “fanatics”. In the wake of Venner’s rising, the king issued a proclamation against

“Seditious Meetings and Conventicles”, banning religious groups such as Quakers and Baptists from holding public gatherings. By late 1662, with the first pieces of religious legislation in force and no major disruption resulting, Charles’s government had proved itself able to see off

any potential revolt over its religious policies.

In April 1661, the crowds watching Monarchy banish Rebellion had a lot to celebrate. They had extricated themselves from turmoil and could now hope for peace in the three kingdoms under a monarch who appeared to be trying to keep his promises. They might, however, have recognised that the scene enacted at the triumphal arch glossed over some awkward truths. In early 1660, public opinion had manifested itself through activities – such as protest, satire and mass petitioning – that the monarchy normally associated with ‘Rebellion’.

To observers in 1660, the growing enthusiasm for the restoration of the monarchy, while showing a long-suppressed royalism, also appeared to owe a great deal to political pragmatism. The desire to end the experience of living under a string of weak or short-lived regimes was a powerful incentive to have the king back quickly, without spending time setting conditions for his return.

The prominence of Rebellion and her ally Confusion at the start of the coronation festivities was designed to remind onlookers of the dangers they had escaped. Yet the performance also tacitly acknowledged that much of the strength of Charles’s regime derived, not from the people’s love for their king, but from their fears of a return to the ‘confusion’ of the last two decades. **H**

Kate Loveman is associate professor in English literature, 1600–1789, at the University of Leicester. Her books include *Samuel Pepys and His Books* (OUP, 2015)

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BLOOD BROTHERS

ALAMY



The three siblings Edward IV, George, Duke of Clarence and the future Richard III were meant to be on the same side in the Wars of the Roses. Yet the relationship between these heavyweights of the House of York was defined by jealousy, backstabbing and murder. **Thomas Penn** describes the great family rivalry that dogged the English throne in the later 15th century

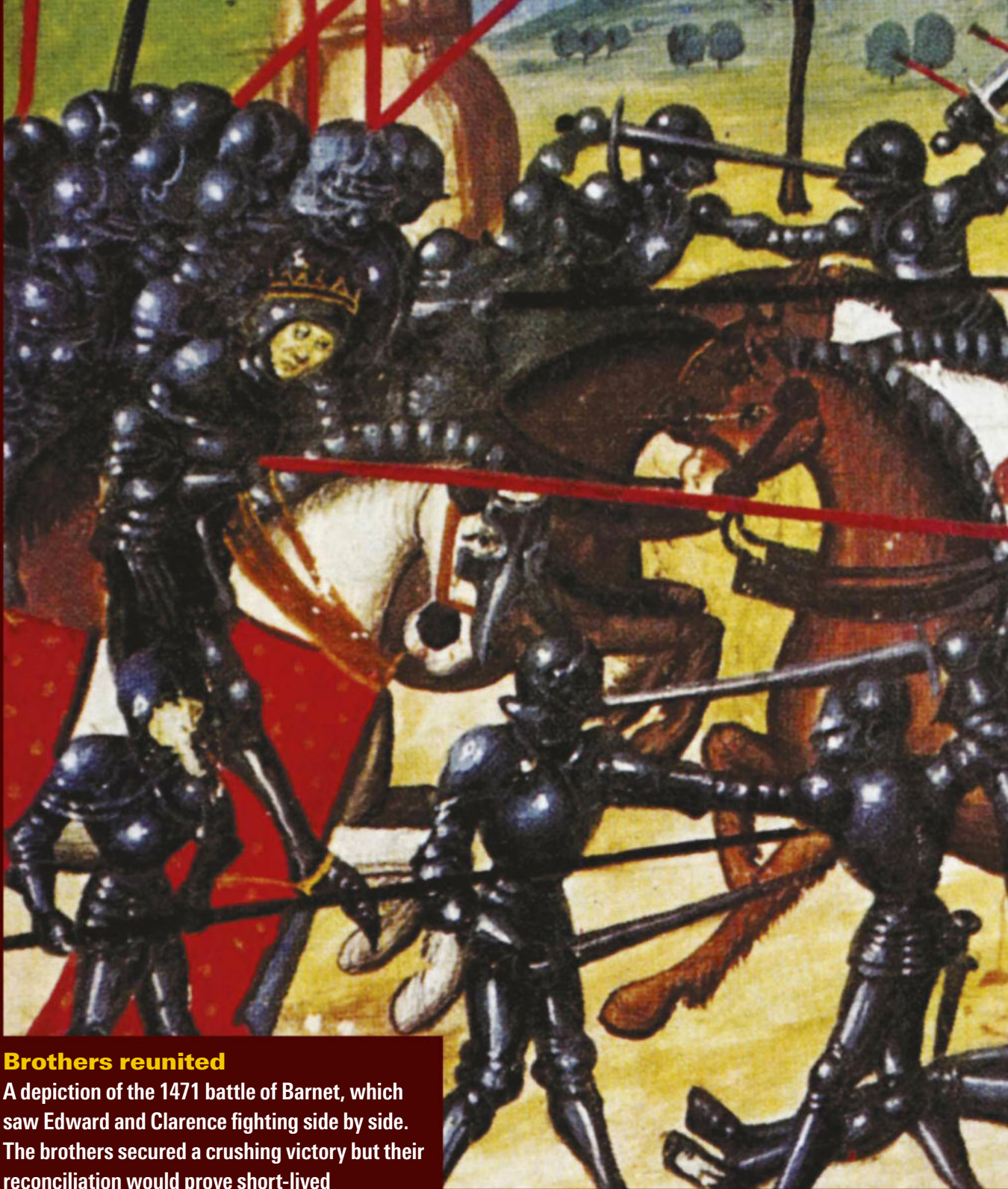
Yorkists at war

The House of York versus the House of Lancaster. Edward IV versus Henry VI. White rose versus red. The Wars of the Roses – the vicious conflict for the English crown that dogged the kingdom for three decades in the 15th century – has long been described as a grand dynastic struggle waged by competing families. And not without reason.

But during this time, the war began to turn inwards: a destructive chain of rebellion, deposition, vendetta, fratricide, usurpation and regicide that originated within the house of York itself. At the heart of this unparalleled act of dynastic self-harm was the mutually destructive relationship between three royal siblings on the same side of the great dynastic divide: Edward IV, the future Richard III, and the middle brother, George, Duke of Clarence, who wanted to be king but never was. It's impossible to understand this bloody period in English history – culminating in the rise of the Tudors – without understanding the forces that drove these three brothers apart.

The key figure in the bitter familial dispute was Edward IV, the eldest son of Richard, Duke of York, and the man who, in 1461, had seized the crown from his hapless Lancastrian foe, Henry VI. At first, Edward seemed a breath of fresh air after the chaotic reign of his predecessor. Six foot four inches in his stockinged feet, he was a magnetic, virile war-leader. One good authority thought him “the most beautiful prince my eyes ever beheld”. Edward did everything intensely: fighting, governing, deal-making and partying. He loved luxury, maintaining a sensational wardrobe and court (an important aspect of kingship, given the significance of ‘magnificence’, or outward splendour) and projected the supreme self-confidence of his motto, *counforte et liesse*, comfort and joy.

But beneath this excess of energy something darker was at play. Historians have often struggled to reconcile Edward's manifold excesses and contradictions, but perhaps something approaching an answer can be found in the deeply rooted narcissism that fuelled his compulsive behaviour: the gourmandising, drinking, rapacious womanising and addiction to pleasure that quickly caused unease among his advisors. He displayed typically narcissistic traits: a marked lack of empathy, a thin-skinned inability to accept criticism, a constant desire for affirmation, and an indecision that manifested itself at crucial moments. These negative qualities all fuelled the slow breakdown in relations within the House of York during the 1460s, in particular with his



Brothers reunited

A depiction of the 1471 battle of Barnet, which saw Edward and Clarence fighting side by side. The brothers secured a crushing victory but their reconciliation would prove short-lived



Lap of luxury Edward IV loved displays of wealth. Here, he is shown receiving a book from Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, with his queen and courtiers in attendance – all clothed in the finest robes



Weak ruler Henry VI, Edward IV's Lancastrian rival for the throne. The threats to Edward's crown didn't end with the deaths, in 1471, of Henry and his son

brother Clarence and with his influential cousin Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, who had done so much to put him on the throne and whom he increasingly ignored.

In his later years, Edward underwent the kind of physical transformation paralleled by that of his grandson Henry VIII, with his doctors entirely failing to put the brake on his prodigious appetites. As he became more obese, his fine features began to blur with fat – “gross”, winced one commentator. The king's physical decline was mirrored in a growing listlessness and depression: precisely the kind of enfeebling that his councillors had worried about. Increasingly, his rule became involuted, his dealings with both subjects and foreign princes contorted, obsessive and avaricious. With all this came a terrifying unpredictability. Tellingly, one commentator remarked how those outside Edward's charmed circle began to desert the king, perhaps convinced that the game of courtiership wasn't worth playing.

Vulnerable wealth

Edward loved his family. As a newly crowned king, that love was sharpened by his experience of the conflict of preceding months, which had seen his father, Richard, Duke of York, and Edmund – his closest brother, with whom he had grown up at the family home of Ludlow – killed by a Lancastrian army at Wakefield. In the early years of his kingship, his love was concentrated especially on his two remaining brothers, his protective fraternal impulse perhaps exaggerated by the substantial age gap between them: George was 11 to his 19, and Richard was eight.

The two younger boys had known little but political upheaval, the backdrop to their early years the bloody antagonism between the houses of York and Lancaster. Early in 1461, after the murder of their father, they had been spirited out of the country to Flanders for their own safety. But when they returned to England in the June of that year, their lives had been swiftly transformed. With their big brother Edward now king of England, they were first and second in line to the throne. They needed endowments to reflect this new, exalted status, and Edward, flush with the confiscated wealth of his Lancastrian opponents, rewarded them accordingly.

Both George and Richard were given royal dukedoms. George received the dukedom of Clarence (which had originally belonged to the second son of Edward III, from whom the Yorkists were descended), together with a vast portfolio of lands, instantly making him one of the greatest noblemen in England. Richard, meanwhile, was handed the title of Duke of Gloucester. His landed settlement was rather more of a ragbag: his majority was

Edward would envelop George and Richard in his smothering love – but he expected their unconditional loyalty in return

some way off, and Edward had plenty of other Yorkist supporters to reward.

Circumstances had raised Edward, Clarence and Richard into a place of exceptional power and wealth. Yet the sense that they could lose everything in an instant rarely left them. This precariousness was at times overwhelming: it distorted their behaviour and decision-making, their views of the world and, ultimately, of each other.

Edward was hardly the first king to prioritise his family. Nevertheless, he was specific about his rationale for doing so. While he subscribed to the prevailing view that the “might of the land” rested in the “great lords”, he stressed that power should most of all be concentrated in the hands of his family, the “king's blood”. The quantity of royal blood in people's veins correlated directly to the extent that they should “of right” be “honoured and enhanced of right and power”. Edward, in other words, would build up his brothers, heaping them with possessions and riches.

But with every grant, Edward intended to bind his siblings more tightly to him: tied, he explained, not only by the “bonds of nature”, or blood, but by the “bonds of so great benefit” that he had given them. It was a way of underscoring not just their familial closeness, but the servitude that lay at the heart of their fraternal relationship. Edward would envelop George and Richard in his smothering love – but he expected their unconditional loyalty in return. In the first instance, this applied especially to George, or as he now was, the Duke of Clarence.

Clarence, for his part, would prove phenomenally disobedient. In the early years of Edward's rule, the de facto heir to the throne grew up fast; by all accounts, he was intelligent, with a quicksilver wit. But he also had the overdeveloped sense of honour and self-entitlement characteristic of the landed classes of the age. Barely into his teens, he was already hungry for power and pricklingly sensitive about his new status – which, was, as he well knew, fragile. Once Edward married

and had children, Clarence would cease to be heir to the throne. More pressingly, the exceptional wealth with which he had been endowed was vulnerable to the demands of rival claimants. Clarence was “not born to have any livelihood”: his lands had been confiscated from their previous, Lancastrian, incumbents. As soon as these noble families had made their peace with the Yorkist regime, they would be wanting those titles and lands back – and what the king gave, the king could always take away.

Fraternal knot unravels

By the late 1460s, Clarence’s sense of insecurity had deepened, fuelled by a growing resentment against Edward. One way of acquiring hereditary landed wealth – not subject to the whims and vagaries of royal favour – was to marry a rich heiress, and Clarence’s eye had alighted on one of the greatest of them all. This was Isabel Neville, the older daughter of his Yorkist cousin, the powerful and influential Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick. But while the upwardly mobile family of Edward’s new queen, Elizabeth Woodville, was busy marrying into the Yorkist establishment, Edward categorically refused to let his brother’s match go ahead.

Convinced that Edward was denying him what was rightfully his, Clarence also felt excluded from the king’s inner circle, one increasingly dominated by members of the queen’s Woodville family and their affiliates. This burgeoning sense of grievance was recognised and nurtured by Clarence’s putative father-in-law, Richard, Earl of Warwick. Himself estranged from Edward, the king he had once helped put on the throne, Warwick saw Clarence as his new project and convinced him he could do better. Clarence duly married Warwick’s daughter in defiance of Edward’s wishes and, aged 19, went into open rebellion against his own brother.

It was impressionable behaviour: one contemporary, trying to explain it, shrugged that Clarence had “a mind too conscious of a daring deed”. And such behaviour had enormous consequences. In 1470 Clarence, alongside Warwick and a French-backed Lancastrian army, forced Edward into exile and restored Henry VI to the throne.

Henry rewarded Clarence by making him next in line to the throne after his son. But Clarence soon realised that the newly

Richard seemed to be everything that Clarence was not. Fiercely loyal, he had fought with remarkable ferocity in the battles of 1471

restored Lancastrian regime couldn’t give him what he wanted. And so he made up with Edward again.

In spring 1471, after an emotional reunion, Edward and Clarence joined forces in the battles of Barnet, where Warwick was killed, and Tewkesbury, where the house of Lancaster was all but exterminated. As one poet, triumphantly proclaiming unity between the Yorkist brothers, asserted: “The knot was knit again.”

That knot quickly began to loosen. The escalating infighting had pitched Clarence against Edward’s household men – who, whatever their fine words in public, had “other language” about Clarence’s actions in private – and against Queen Elizabeth Woodville, whose father and brother Clarence had had executed during his rebellion against his brother Edward. As a haze of paranoid mistrust settled around Clarence, a new element was added to this toxic stew: the youngest Yorkist brother, Richard.

Richard seemed to be everything that Clarence was not. Fiercely loyal, dependable and obedient, he had fled into exile with

Edward in 1469, and had then fought with remarkable ferocity in the battles of 1471, belying not only his youth – he was still only 18 – but his apparent physical fragility. Even though the scoliosis that had begun to afflict him was hardly detectable, in time it doubtless contributed to the contrast, remarked on time and again by contemporaries, between Richard’s slight frame and his “great heart”.

Growing up in the shadow of the grabby, aggressive Clarence, Richard learned to keep quiet and to bide his time. Perhaps driven by a desire to order the messy reality around him, Richard prized the abstract ideals that he found in books – chivalry, justice, piety, loyalty – which could be defined and enumerated. Edward valued Richard’s fidelity and rewarded his youngest brother accordingly, setting him up as Warwick’s de facto heir in the north-east of England. For Richard, this was the great landed powerbase that he craved.

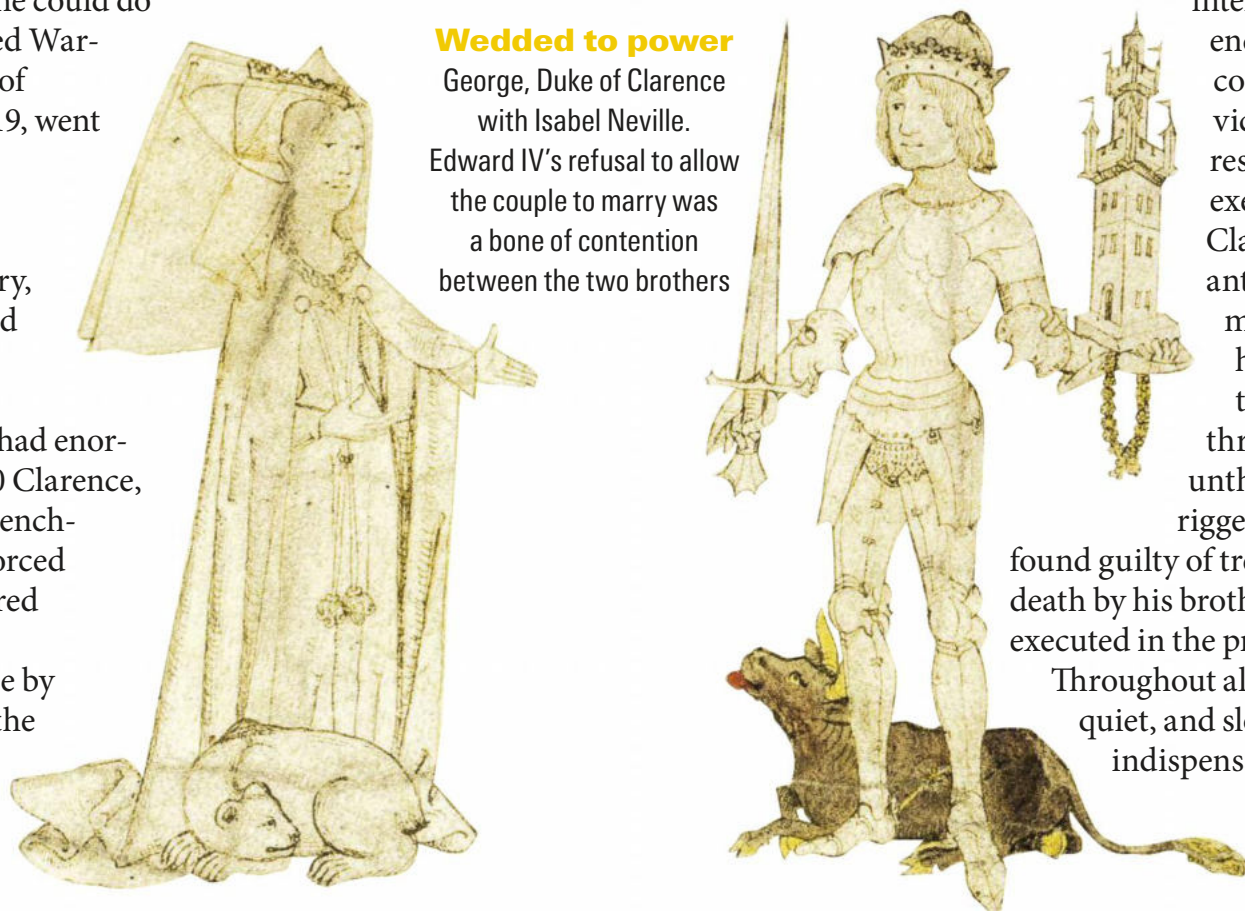
Whispering campaign

If Richard shared Clarence’s hunger for wealth and power, he also shared the predicament of how to make his vast gains permanent, to protect them for his family line in perpetuity. In this regard, Edward was prepared to indulge Richard as he had never done Clarence. He allowed Richard to marry Warwick’s younger daughter, Anne, which in turn enabled his younger brother to consolidate his hold on the late earl’s lands, and to move in on Clarence’s share of the Warwick estates, inherited through his wife, Isabel.

All of this served to fuel Clarence’s persecution complex, which, despite the brothers’ reconciliation in 1471, had never really gone away. By 1477, the whispering campaign against him at court had grown intense; this, allied to his enduring inability to control his tongue and a vicious lashing-out that resulted in the judicial execution of some of Clarence’s former servants, helped convince a mistrustful Edward that his brother was still trying to usurp his throne. In early 1478, the unthinkable happened. In a rigged trial, Clarence was found guilty of treason, condemned to death by his brother the king, and executed in the privacy of the Tower. Throughout all this Richard kept quiet, and slowly made himself indispensable to Edward. He was also persuasive, encouraging the

Wedded to power

George, Duke of Clarence with Isabel Neville. Edward IV’s refusal to allow the couple to marry was a bone of contention between the two brothers



THE POWER TRIO

The three Yorkist brothers who dominated England



Edward IV 1442–83

FAMILY

Married to Elizabeth Woodville; children included Edward V and Richard of Shrewsbury (the princes in the Tower), and Elizabeth of York, who would go on to marry Henry VII.

STRENGTHS

He was hugely charismatic, exuding strength, authority and self-confidence.

WEAKNESSES

A narcissist, his behaviour became increasingly compulsive. His prodigious appetites resulted in ballooning weight later in life.

DOWNFALL

Edward died of an unspecified illness – possibly typhoid or pneumonia – in April 1483. His sudden death, aged 40, shocked the nation.



George, Duke of Clarence 1449–78

FAMILY

George was married to Isabel Neville, older daughter of the powerful magnate Richard, Earl of Warwick. Henry VII regarded the couple's oldest son, Edward, Earl of Warwick, as a threat and had him executed in 1499.

STRENGTHS

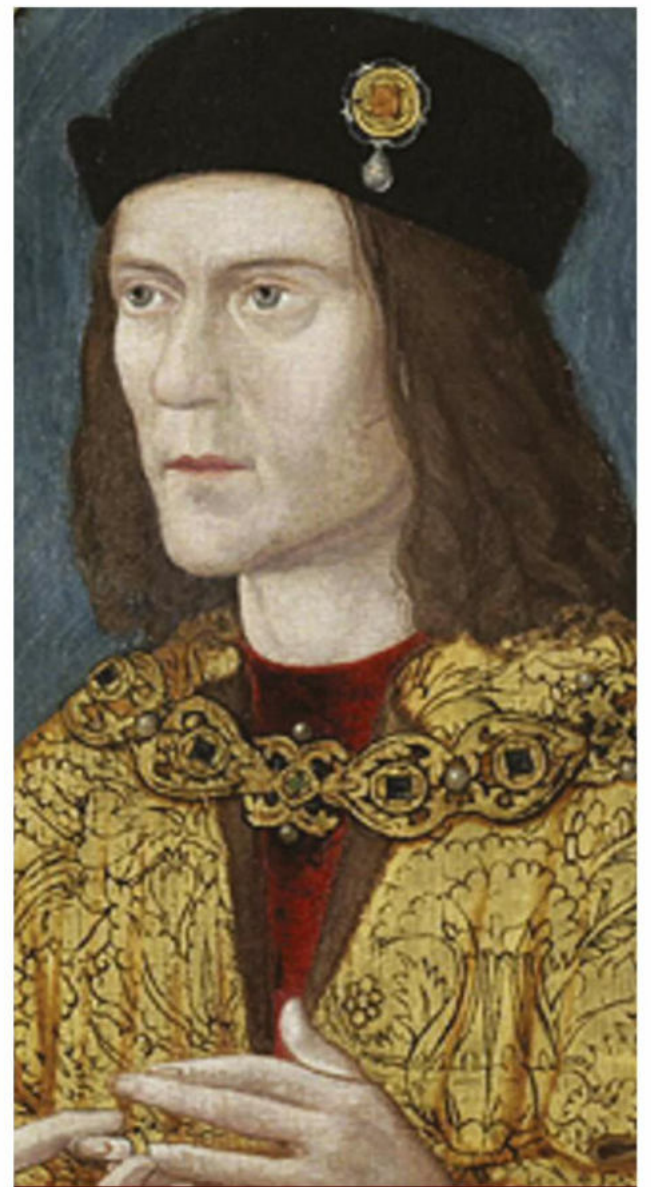
He was intelligent and quick-witted.

WEAKNESSES

George's intelligence was matched by a sense of self-entitlement and a wilful independence of mind – characteristics that, in his relationship with his brother Edward, would cost him dear.

DOWNFALL

Edward IV lost patience with his recalcitrant brother in 1478 and ordered his execution in the Tower of London.



Richard III 1452–85

FAMILY

Richard married Anne Neville, younger daughter of the Earl of Warwick. He had one legitimate son, Edward of Middleham, who died as a child.

STRENGTHS

Loyal, dependable, idealistic and brave, he gained a formidable reputation as a soldier in the 1471 battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury.

WEAKNESSES

His inability to practise the kingly ideals he preached – as well as a failure to control the narrative surrounding the fate of the princes in the Tower – led ultimately to his downfall.

DOWNFALL

His killing at the battle of Bosworth in 1485 ushered in Henry VII, the first of the Tudors.



Controversial king

The reputation of Richard III – shown with his queen, Anne Neville, in the 15th-century Rous Roll – was tainted by the allegation that he had ordered the killing of his brother Edward's sons

king to become embroiled in a pointless war against Scotland. Edward, meanwhile, fed his brother's military aspirations, appointing him leader of his army with the promise that Richard could keep whatever territory he conquered north of the border. So when, in 1483, Edward died leaving a 12-year-old heir, Richard considered himself the natural candidate to run the country as protector until the boy-king came of age.

Richard's seizure of power was driven by the peculiarly corrosive mix of vulnerability, self-serving opportunism and conviction that had come to characterise the politics of the age. In the newly precarious world that followed Edward's death, Richard believed that the Woodvilles were out to get him; he also took a dim view of the late king's failure to live up to the ideals of kingship. Edward, as Richard saw it, had sunk into a pit of depravity and vice, and the country had suffered. The all-too-convenient revelation that Edward's marriage had been invalid, and that his sons were bastards, allowed Richard to present himself as the only true-blooded alternative.

He was a keen student of kingship and was convinced that he

knew what it took to rule. He would be the ideal king: expansive, open-handed and just. At home, he would bring peace, reimpose the rule of law and champion the poor and downtrodden; abroad, he would show himself the war-leader that Edward had failed to be. These ideals swiftly disintegrated on contact with the realities of kingship.

A shattering death

Richard's binary view of the world – one in which he was on the side of "virtue" and his enemies of "vice" – had served him well on the battlefield and as his brother's right-hand man. As king, it served him poorly. Inflexible and impulsive, his inability to live up to the ideals he had so publicly proclaimed looked to many like hypocrisy and a profound failure in kingship. He was further handicapped by the shattering death of his son and

heir, Edward (who succumbed as a child to an unspecified illness), and by his increasing reliance on a small cabal of followers. The notorious verse pinned to the door of St Paul's Cathedral in the summer of 1484 – "The Cat, the Rat, and Lovell our dog/Rule all England under a hog", a refer-

Richard's binary view of the world had served him well on the battlefield and as his brother's right-hand man. As king, it served him poorly

ence to three of Richard's closest advisors and Richard's boar badge – wasn't a gratuitous insult: it went to the heart of what people felt had gone so quickly wrong with his regime.

Most of all, Richard was unable to control the narrative around the fate of the princes, Edward IV's two sons, who he had declared illegitimate and had locked in the Tower of London. In a sense, what Richard had or hadn't done was irrelevant: it was what people believed that mattered – and "the people", as one chronicler wrote, "laid the blame only on him". It was this, ultimately, that drove Yorkists loyal to Edward IV and the princes to find an alternative figurehead in Henry Tudor, an exiled Lancastrian with the merest smattering of royal blood – itself an astonishing comment on Richard's rule.

Richard died as he had lived. On the eve of Bosworth, he saw the coming battle as a nihilistic encounter. If victory fell to him, he would "ruin" Tudor and his followers; after all, he pronounced, Tudor would do "exactly the same" to Richard and his men if he lost.

Few subscribed to this vision of total destruction; indeed, many of Richard's declared supporters sat out the battle on the sidelines. Nevertheless, people did see Bosworth as a settling of scores, not between the houses of York and Lancaster, but between two factions of the house of York: Richard and his supporters against Yorkists faithful to Edward IV and his line. But if, as one commentator remarked after the event, it was "King Edward's sons whose cause, above all, was avenged in this battle", the real winner was another king entirely: Henry Tudor. **H**

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Thomas Penn is a historian and author, whose latest book, *The Brothers York: An English Tragedy*, is published by Allen Lane on 3 October. He will be discussing the House of York at our History Weekends in both Chester and Winchester: historyextra.com/events



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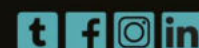
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On the crest of a wave Margaret Thatcher surrounded by soldiers of the 1st Battalion, Royal Hampshire Regiment, during a surprise visit to the Falkland Islands, January 1983. Britain has “ceased to be a nation in retreat”, declared the prime minister in the wake of the victory over Argentine forces

The Falklands feelgood factor

The British victory in the South Atlantic in 1982 was a transformative moment for a nation that had lost its empire, its industrial base and its mojo

BY **DOMINIC SANDBROOK**

Dawn on Monday 14 June 1982: a damp, gloomy morning in the South Atlantic. On the hills above Stanley, the tiny capital of the Falkland Islands, the gunfire had finally died down. After hours of

savage fighting overnight, Major General Jeremy Moore's troops had broken through the Argentine lines on Wireless Ridge and Mount Tumbledown. At last, 10 weeks after the Argentines had seized the Falklands, the drama was approaching its climax.

On Wireless Ridge, the journalist Max Hastings trudged past the abandoned Argentine positions and sat down to type his latest despatch for *The Standard*. Of all the reporters embedded in the task force, none had identified more closely with Britain's fighting men. Now Hastings paid a tribute to the paratroopers celebrating their latest victory. "Their morale is sky-high," he wrote. "Their certainty that they have won and that the enemy is collapsing is absolute. They are very cold, very dirty, but in their mood this morning, they could march to London." Then he heard shouting: "They're running away! It's on the radio! The Argies are running everywhere! Victory!"

Hastings hitched a lift on a tank to the lip of the ridge, and looked down on to the road leading to Stanley, its little houses laid out like a train set. "There was a chance, just a chance," he thought, "that we could be first into Stanley. It would be the greatest scoop of my professional life."

The troops moved on. Then, at the little racecourse on the outskirts of the town, the exhausted paratroopers halted for a cup of tea. Hastings kept walking, and before he knew it, he was in the town itself. He raised his hands in the air, one clutching a white handkerchief, and kept going. He passed lines of Argentine soldiers, "cowed, drained of hostility". Then, at last, he saw what he was looking for: the Falklands' lone hotel, the Upland Goose.

He went inside, and found some 20 people in the bar. "I'm from the task force," he said, and they burst into applause. "We never doubted for a moment that the British would come," the landlord said. "We have just been waiting for the moment. Would you like a drink?"

Thousands of miles away, Margaret Thatcher, who had staked her political survival on the bid to recapture the islands, was in 10 Downing Street, waiting for news. A

few hours later, she got the call. On a scrap of notepaper she scribbled the time and date, and then a few sketchy but momentous words: "Gen Moore pressed forward – Enemy retreated... White flags flying over Stanley."

Then she went across to the Commons. It had gone 10 in the evening, and the mood was electric. When she announced the news of the Argentine surrender,

the cheers were deafening. Upstairs, surrounded by well-wishers in her Commons office, she wept. Her husband, Denis, put his arm around her. "Well done," he said. "Have a drink."

Almost 40 years on, the importance of the Falklands War, not just for Margaret Thatcher but for modern Britain, can scarcely be exaggerated. On 2 April 1982, the day Argentine forces captured the collection of tiny islands 300 miles off the South American coast, most people could not have identified them on a map. Britain might have ruled the Falklands for nearly 150 years, but many of the British servicemen who sailed south a few days later had genuinely assumed they were off the coast of Scotland.

And there were always those who thought the conflict ludicrous, the stuff of some deluded tragi-comic-opera. The Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges remarked that the combatants looked like "two bald men fighting over a comb", while the children's author Raymond Briggs caricatured them as the Tin-Pot Foreign General (a reference to Argentine dictator Leopoldo Galtieri) and the Old Iron Woman. The war was "xenophobic militarism", declared Salman Rushdie, who thought it reflected "the politics of the Victorian nursery; if somebody pinches you, you take their trousers down and thrash them".

But that was not how most people saw it. Right from the beginning, the Falklands War was one of the most popular conflicts in modern British history. On 5 April, the day the task force sailed south, one poll found that 88 per cent of voters thought Britain had an obligation to support the islanders, while 70 per cent would sink Argentine ships if necessary and 41 per cent wanted the government to use force right away. Two weeks later, another survey found that one in three people wanted to bomb the Argentine mainland, while one in five thought British troops should invade Argentina itself.

And every time another ship left for the South Atlantic, crowds poured onto the dockside, weeping and waving Union Jacks. One paper interviewed a veteran of the First World War, Tommy Mallen, who had come to watch the fleet sail from Portsmouth. "I thought England was done for, spineless, a doormat for the world," he said. "I'd pass the war memorials or see Nelson's *Victory* and wonder what it had all been for. But I was wrong, thank God. We are still a proud country, and we'll still protect our own."

So why did the war matter so much? And why does it still matter today? As so often, context is everything. At

The journalist Max Hastings – pictured on the Falklands while embedded with the British task force – hailed paratroopers' absolute certainty in the prospect of victory



TOPFOTO

the beginning of April 1982, Britain was a weary, divided, unhappy place. Almost three years after Margaret Thatcher had come to office, her campaign slogan – “Don’t just hope for a better life. Vote for one” – rang horribly hollow. The economy had nosedived into the deepest recession since the Great Depression, unemployment had soared to a record 3 million and many factories had closed forever.

In the summer of 1981, the headlines had belonged to the rioters who tore apart Brixton, Toxteth, Southall and Moss Side, as well as the IRA hunger strikers starving themselves to death in Belfast. By Christmas, Thatcher was the most unpopular prime minister since the Second World War, while her party was running a poor third behind the new SDP-Liberal Alliance and Michael Foot’s Labour. And at the beginning of 1982, few people would have bet against her becoming just another failed one-term leader, an accident of history whose radical experiment had merely hastened Britain’s post-imperial decline.

Behind all this lay a much deeper story. For more than a decade before 1982, the headlines had been unremittingly bad. The empire was gone, the economy was struggling, the old industrial base was crumbling and the old certainties had vanished. Inflation, strikes, unemployment; riots, bombings, scandals; failure, shabbiness, disappointment: this had been Britain’s narrative since the mid-1960s.

Abroad, the *New York Times* told its readers that Britain, a “country that simply doesn’t work very well”, was “likely to keep getting poorer for years to come”. People said much the same at home, too. In a leaked despatch from the British embassy in Paris in the summer of 1979, the diplomat Sir Nicholas Henderson reported that other Europeans now saw Britain as “a model not to follow if economic disaster is to be avoided”. “You only have to move about western Europe nowadays,” he wrote sadly, “to realise how poor and unproud the British have become in relation to their neighbours.”

And Henderson’s compatriots agreed with him. When the American travel writer Paul Theroux travelled along Britain’s coastline in the spring of 1982, the locals queued up to disparage their own country. “We’re awful,” they told him. “This country is hopeless. We’re never prepared for anything. Nothing works properly.”

The irony, of course, was that most people were actually better off than ever, leading lives of unprecedented comfort, variety and opportunity. But perhaps never before in Britain’s history had people held their own country in such low regard. This helps explain why, despite their doubts, they had voted by two to one in 1975 to remain in the European Community, into which Edward Heath had taken them two years earlier. To put it bluntly, many believed that Britain, as a unique, self-reliant national project, was finished. Even Margaret Thatcher’s predecessor, Jim Callaghan, once told his Labour colleagues that if he were a younger man, “I would emigrate”. He was only half joking.

BRIDGEMAN ARCHIVES



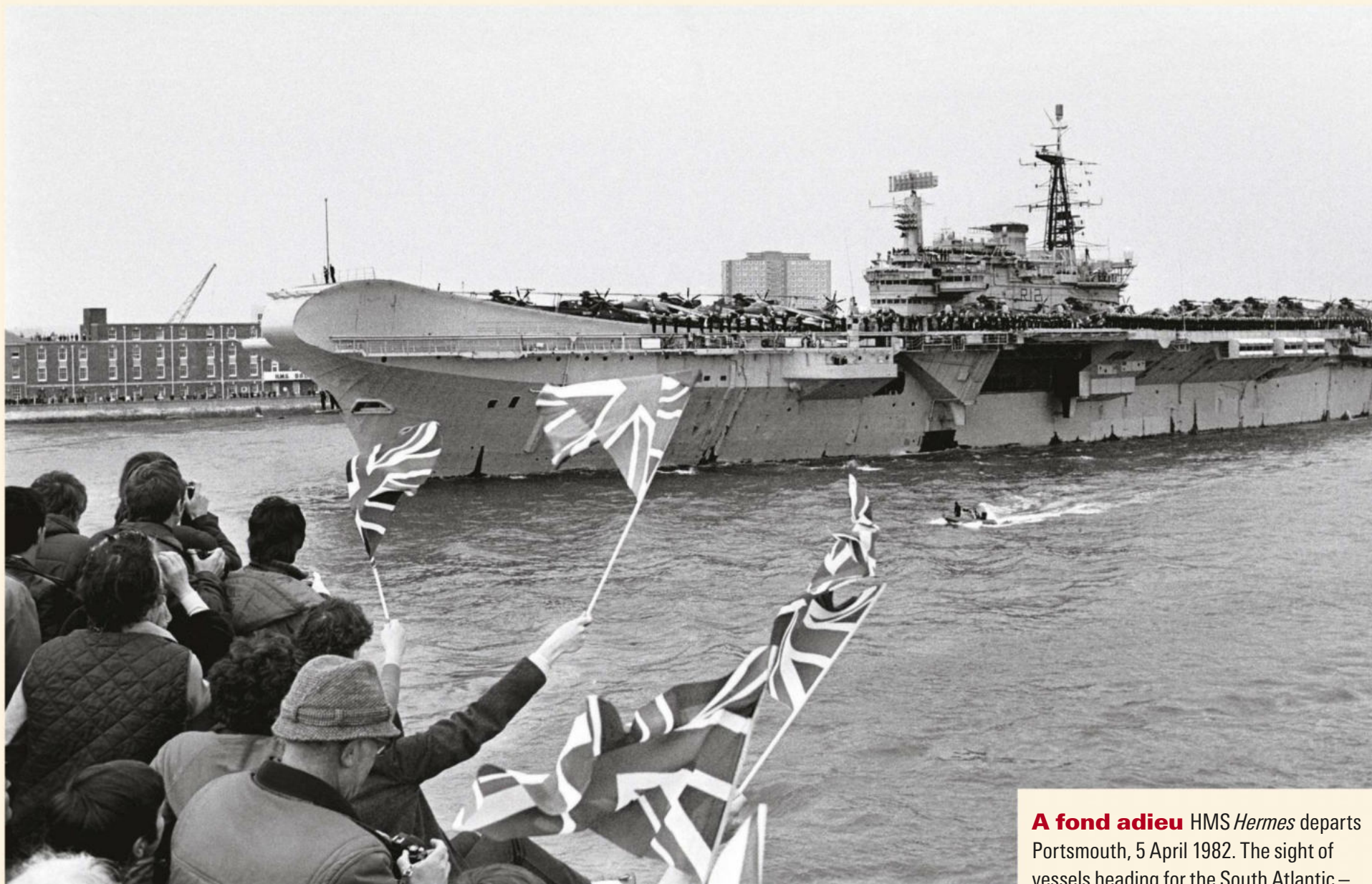
Arrested development Police detain a man during the Brixton riots of April 1981. With the economy tanking and inner cities in flames, “Argentina’s invasion of the Falklands seemed the crushing confirmation of Britain’s insignificance”, writes Dominic Sandbrook

For all Mrs Thatcher’s promises, this did not change after she took office in 1979. Two years into her tenure, national morale was probably worse than ever. The riots, in particular, dealt a savage blow to Britain’s self-esteem. “People are bound to ask what is happening to our country,” lamented the *Express*. “Having been one of the most law-abiding countries in the world – a byword for stability, order, and decency – are we changing into something else?” “WHERE ARE WE GOING?” asked *The Times* a few days later. “We may no longer have an empire. We may no longer be the workshop of the world. We may even have difficulty in paying our way.” But at least, it said, the country was renowned for its “tolerance and gentleness”. Not any more. For “now that too seems to have been exposed as a false dream”.

Argentina’s invasion of the Falklands – the culmination of decades of growing tensions as Buenos Aires disputed British rule of the islands – seemed the crowning humiliation, a crushing confirmation of Britain’s insignificance. “We’ve lost the Falklands,” the Tory MP Alan Clark told his wife on 2 April. “It’s all over. We’re a Third World country, no good for anything.”

Yet almost as soon as Mrs Thatcher announced that the task force would sail, the mood began to change. Even the writer Jonathan Raban, who was horrified by her decision to go to war, wept when he watched the ships sail from Portsmouth. “The families on the shore, the receding ships, the bands and streamers,” he admitted, “had me blubbing with silly pride in Queen and Country.” And while shopping in Lancaster, one woman, who was personally deeply opposed to the war,

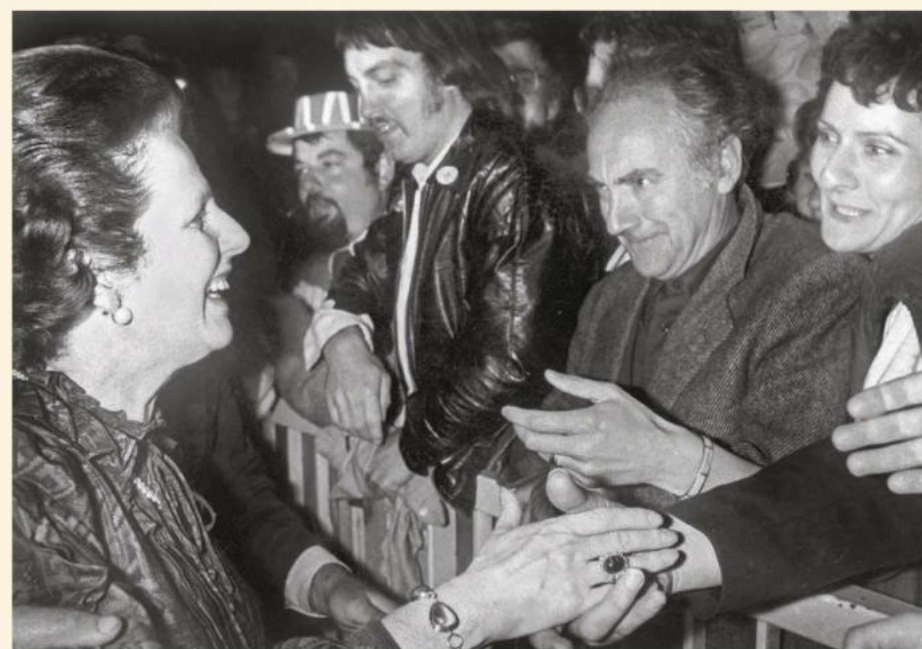
“The Tory MP Alan Clark told his wife: ‘We’ve lost the Falklands. It’s over. We’re a Third World country, no good for anything’



A fond adieu HMS *Hermes* departs Portsmouth, 5 April 1982. The sight of vessels heading for the South Atlantic – to the backdrop of flag-waving crowds – was enough to move cynics to tears



Splash landing Men of the 29th Commando Regiment Royal Artillery wade ashore at Plymouth, July 1982, from the same craft they'd used during their assault on San Carlos Bay



From zero to hero Margaret Thatcher greets well-wishers in Downing Street, 17 June 1982. Victory in the Falklands powered the once unpopular leader on to two further election successes

overheard a group of elderly men talking about the crisis. "She's a grand lass," one said of Mrs Thatcher, to general approval. "We'll show 'em we're British, eh?"

Ten weeks later, Mrs Thatcher's admirers had the result they wanted. For the prime minister herself it was a decisive moment. "If things had gone wrong it would have been known as Thatcher's War," said the *Mirror*, which had spent the last three years damning everything she stood for. "But now things have gone right nobody should deny her the credit... The scale of her triumph, in both military and political terms, is amazing." Many ordinary voters said much the same. "I have always voted Labour," a Birmingham shop steward said in the autumn of 1982. But "I am an admirer of Margaret Thatcher as a leader. She impressed me over the Falklands. She said it was ours and we were going to defend it... I have never seen my way clear to voting Conservative. It is only what Maggie has done that has made me waver." He was not, of course, alone.

Yet the significance of victory went well beyond the electoral fortunes of a single woman. "We have seen in these weeks of crisis and battle a remarkable resurgence of patriotism," wrote the columnist George Gale, the day after the Argentines surrendered. "It has welled up from the nation's depth. We have undergone a sea-change."

Indeed, whatever they thought of the war itself, almost everybody agreed that victory had brought a profound shift in the national narrative. For the *Daily Mail*'s Robin Oakley, the war was one of those "moments which can lift a nation's mood and alter its history", marking the "restoration of Britain's pride and self-confidence". Even the left-wing Tony Benn recognised that there had been a dramatic change in the way that people thought about their country. "I feel somehow that we are at a real turning point in politics," he wrote that summer. "I can't quite describe it... I feel we have just come to the end of an era." Another controversial prophet of national decline put it more bluntly. "A change has come about in Britain," wrote Enoch Powell. "We are ourselves again."

Powell's words could hardly have been more telling. Those who opposed the Falklands War often dismissed it as an exercise in nostalgic nationalism. But nostalgic nationalism was precisely what many people craved. Max Hastings, for example, was tired of reporting on "one aspect or another of national failure", and was itching "to record a national success". "We British had been kicked too often," agreed one paratrooper, who had been traumatised by his experiences in the Falklands, yet felt proud to have fought "for our country and its beliefs".

But nobody captured the mood better than Thatcher herself. Britain, she said, had "ceased to be a nation in retreat", and had "rekindled that spirit which has fired her for generations past and which today has begun to burn as brightly as before. Britain found herself again in the South Atlantic and will not look back from the victory she has

won." And whatever they thought of her, millions clearly agreed.

The Falklands, then, was a genuine turning point, the first for 40 years. In practical terms it changed nothing. Psychologically, however, it changed everything. In the public imagination, it marked the end of an era defined by post-imperial introspection, providing a new national myth to rank alongside Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain.

Indeed, the look and feel of the conflict might have been designed specifically for a generation weaned on *The Dam Busters* and *Dad's Army*. The great spectacle of the task force ploughing through the Atlantic was perfectly calculated to stir the hearts of a seafaring people who had grown up with stories of Drake and Nelson. And the pictures of the little green figures with their enormous packs, trudging stoically across the windswept moorlands, played perfectly to the self-image of an indomitable island race, never happier than when the weather was miserable and the odds were against them. Once again, Britain had been written off. Once again, Britain had prevailed.

But it might not have done. The logistical difficulties of sailing halfway across the world and landing in horrendous conditions, without proper air cover, meant the war could easily have gone the other way. And if it had, there is a good case that Britain today would look very different.

Defeat in the Falklands would probably have brought a swift end to the Thatcher experiment. More profoundly, it would surely have confirmed for good the impression of national decline. There would have been no cheering crowds on the quayside, no flag-waving parade in the City of London, no tub-thumping tabloid headlines, no impassioned rhetoric about the spirit of the South Atlantic. Humiliated in the eyes of the world, the British might well have viewed their own country very differently: a nation in decline, reeling from the loss of empire, the collapse of industry and their humiliation at the hands of a South American junta. Perhaps they might even have reconciled themselves to a new role, as just another member of the European Community.

But that is not what happened. The task force returned in triumph. The flags waved, the crowds cheered and Margaret Thatcher basked in the applause of her admirers. "Today," said the *Standard*, in an observation that perfectly captured the public mood, "the Great is back in Britain." **H**

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Dominic Sandbrook is a historian and broadcaster. His latest book, *Who Dares Wins: Britain, 1979-1982*, was published by Allen Lane in September. He'll be discussing the Falklands War at our History Weekend in Winchester: historyextra.com/events

“In the public imagination, victory in the Falklands provided a new national myth to rank alongside Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain

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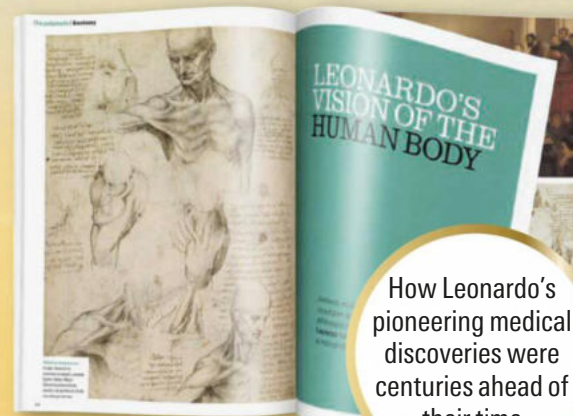
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HISTORICAL FICTION

“Witchcraft trials reflected the theories and fears of a society divided by civil war”

Philippa Gregory on her new novel *Tidelands* ▶ page 77

BOOKS

1960s

// As the new decade dawned, a cultural impatience with the old order was everywhere //



Alwyn Turner on Peter Hennessy's *Winds of Change: Britain in the Early Sixties*

▶ page 72

16TH-CENTURY EUROPE

“It’s brave for any historian to attempt a biography of Charles”

John Edwards on *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V* ▶ page 76

NORTH AMERICA

“A Hispanic past runs rich and deep throughout the history of what is now the United States”

Sarah Pearsall reviews Carrie Gibson's *El Norte* ▶ page 77

INTERVIEW

“The East India Company was a corporation that could conquer land or topple kings”

William Dalrymple discusses *The Anarchy* ▶ page 68

INTERVIEW / WILLIAM DALRYMPLE

“It’s not only a story of colonial oppression, but also asset-stripping, plunder and corporate violence”

WILLIAM DALRYMPLE talks to Ellie Cawthorne about his new book on the East India Company – the Tudor corporation that mutated into a ruthless colonial powerhouse

One of history’s most powerful global corporations, the East India Company (EIC) was founded by royal charter in 1600, and awarded monopoly over all English trade in Asia and the Pacific. One of its major sources of profit was Indian textiles. But the company’s interests stretched far beyond trading – over the next 250 years, it became the major imperial power on the Indian subcontinent. With the help of its large private army, the EIC acquired multiple territories including Bengal, Orissa and Bihar. Concerns about the EIC’s corrupt and monopolistic regime culminated in the Indian Rebellion of 1857–58, after which its powers were transferred to the British state.

Ellie Cawthorne: Your new book charts the “relentless rise” of the East India Company. What made this corporation unique?

William Dalrymple: From the time that it was established in 1600 to its dismembering in 1858, the East India Company transformed from a normal trading corporation to an imperial behemoth. Over a relatively short period of time, the most bizarre thing happened – a single London corporation took over the Mughal empire. This was a corporation with an army of 260,000 people that could topple kings, conquer land, or forcibly expel people from land that it wanted to use.

From one angle, this is a story of colonial oppression. But if you consider that the people actually doing the conquest were not the British government operating out of Whitehall, but a private company operating out of a single London office in Leadenhall Street, it all looks completely different. Suddenly it also becomes a corporate story – one of asset-stripping and plunder, corporate violence and corporate irresponsibility. In fact, many of the concerns we have today about the danger of unregulated corporations first reared their heads with the EIC.

How was the company formed?

At the heart of it all was a group of ruthless, determined traders. Many were ex-Caribbean privateers who’d captured Spanish treasure ships under Drake; in modern parlance, pirates. But if you look at the list of the first subscribers to the EIC, you find a whole range of lower-middle-class London tradesmen investing small sums. As well as sailors, there were wine-sellers, leather workers, cloth merchants and haberdashers.

The original intention was to take on Dutch spice traders in Indonesia. But the

Dutch were much better equipped, and so from around the 1620s, EIC traders turned to plan B – Indian textiles. This was a massive business – India was producing spectacular amounts of the world’s finest textiles and flooding markets in far-flung places. Once the EIC jumped on board the textile trade, it mutated from a small fish playing catch-up with the Dutch big boys to *the* major player – the most sophisticated capitalist organisation in the world.

Why do you think the EIC was able to become more powerful than any company that had gone before?

It was a joint-stock corporation, which was something entirely new at the time – they were an Elizabethan invention. This new model presented exciting opportunities, because for the first time, it allowed people to become non-executive shareholders. Anyone with some spare cash could invest it in a company, without having any involvement in the running of the business. That suddenly opened up enormous inflows of money. And trading voyages relied on huge sums because they were a massive risk – the equivalent today would be Elon Musk’s spacecraft. Even if the voyage was successful, it would take a long time to recoup your money. You could send six ships off to India, full of cannon and sailors, and even if the voyage was a fantastic success, you might not see your money back for a decade.

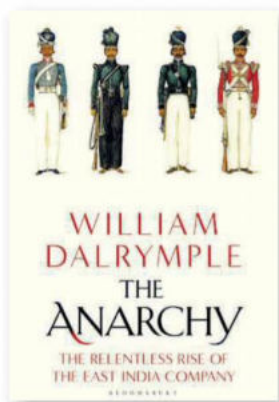
When EIC agents first arrived in India, what did they find?

They were landing in the richest empire in the world. At this point, India was dominated by the Mughals. It was an incredibly well-run, sophisticated empire, and controlled a quarter of the world’s manufacturers. Britain, in comparison, had a measly 3 per cent.

The British were dazzled, they’d never seen anything like it. While they were these slightly crude characters stumbling around in codpieces, the Mughals were gorgeous figures swathed in silks. The English diplomat Sir Thomas Roe described Mughal emperor Jahangir as literally fettered in gold, dripping with diamonds.

But despite all its sophistication, in the mid-18th century, the Mughal empire began to collapse. It fragmented into small regional units, which the company realised it could Hoover up one by one. While the British had formerly been powerless to take on the Mughals, by that point, a military revolution had taken place in Europe. The bayonet and musket had replaced the pike, and file-firing infantry and mobile artillery had first emerged. These innovations created modes of warfare which, when exported to India, suddenly changed the balance of power.

It became clear that profits could come not only in the form of cash, but also chunks of territory. Beginning in the 1740s, trading companies began to transform into mercenary military units. They



The Anarchy:
The Relentless
Rise of the East
India Company
by William Dalrymple
(Bloomsbury, 576 pages, £30)

PROFILE

William Dalrymple is an award-winning writer and historian based in India. His previous books include *Koh-i-Noor: The History of the World's Most Infamous Diamond*, co-authored with Anita Anand (Bloomsbury, 2017); *Return of a King: The Battle for Afghanistan* (Bloomsbury, 2014); and *The Last Mughal: The Eclipse of a Dynasty, Delhi 1857* (Bloomsbury, 2006)

were still buying and selling textiles, but at the same time, they were deploying this new type of infantry warfare, and training up Indian troops (*sepoys*) in mobile horse artillery. With this new technology, they could make mincemeat of vast armies of heavy Indian cavalry.

Was this military edge the key to the EIC's unstoppable rise?

It was certainly one important aspect, but another was its strong economic model. The company really understood finance and quickly found active and enthusiastic collaboration from Indian financiers. At crucial moments when the company was under threat, it was saved by massive loans from Indian bankers who knew that the EIC, however ruthless and predatory it may have been, respected basic business law. If an Indian banker loaned to a Maratha warlord, he could beg and plead but ultimately, he had no guarantee that he'd get his money back. But if he made a deal with the East India Company, he could legally enforce his claim. In the end, it was having the military edge as well as having a consistent cashflow that always kept the company ahead.

How much backing did the EIC get from the British state?

Throughout this period, the British in India had a big rivalry with the French, who had bases at Pondicherry and Bengal. And every time conflict broke out, the crown voted to send fleets to protect the company. Around a quarter of MPs owned shares in the East India Company and they didn't want to lose their investments. So although Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were privately owned trading stations, they were protected by the Royal Navy, paid for by the crown and British taxpayers. In 1757, when the British army defeated the French in Chandernagore, it was state troops who did the fighting. Naturally you'd assume the winnings would go back to the crown, but in fact, they went back to the company.

Large sums of money were expended to compel the state to intervene on behalf of the shareholders. As early as 1624, the company was held up for illegal lobbying and bribing parliamentarians, and there was a very corrupt nexus whereby shareholder MPs voted for measures that lined their own pockets. This meant that (as is the case with so many corporations today) the interests of the corporation became the interests of the state.

Did these underhand activities ever threaten to undermine the interests of parliament?

The company definitely competed with the British state at various points. But they were happy to play it both ways. When they were under threat from the French, it was a British organisation that needed protecting by the government. But once the war was won and land had been conquered, suddenly the company said: "This is ours, not yours – hands off."

Like with so many other corporations, such as Lehman Brothers, while the EIC appeared to be a giant at one moment, the next it could be extremely weak. Many back in Britain were worried that the company could even sink the country's entire economy, in the same way as we've seen recently with Iceland. In the early 1770s, the profits of the company went off a cliff – the share price was wiped out, and the company found itself a million pounds in debt. They went cap in hand to the Bank of England, requesting a vast loan. But the bank

// As early as 1624, the EIC was held up for bribery and illegal lobbying. Shareholder MPs voted for measures that lined their own pockets //



Colonial expansion Lieutenant-Colonel James Tod of the East India Company travels through Rajasthan with his cavalry and sepoy in the 19th century

quite simply didn't have enough money to pay out. Edmund Burke warned parliament that, like a viper at the breast, the EIC would kill the country that nurtured it.

The debate over who should be running the colony raged throughout the 18th and the early 19th centuries. In the end, it was the nation state that triumphed. In 1857, the company screwed up so badly that the Indian Rebellion broke out – a million died in the warfare that followed and the country was left a smoking ruin. This was the point at which parliament finally had enough and nationalised the company. The East India Company Navy was disbanded, and the East India Company Army absorbed into the British Army.

How devastating was the company's exploitation of India?

Here, for the first time in world history, you see something that we're familiar with today: corporations' potential for sheer heartlessness. The EIC operated purely for shareholders' profit – it wasn't there to win votes or help people when things went wrong.

One example of this was the Bengal famine of 1770. Bengal had previously been the bread basket of India, but it had literally been asset-stripped by the company. Even during the famine, *sepoys* were sent out to keep revenue taxes up to their normal level. Even if they were starving, people would have to sell their livestock or homes, or children, in order to pay the taxes the company demanded. Not one penny was remitted. Elsewhere in India there was famine too, but rulers intervened to provide soup kitchens and relief measures. But in Bengal, the company did nothing; it just watched people starve. Profits were kept up, but at the cost of one fifth of all Bengalis dying.

What lessons does this story hold about the relationship between big business and political power?

It's a parable about how violent, ruthless, exploitative and extractive a powerful corporation can become if unregulated.

Even in the 19th century, everyone in Britain knew that governing a country out of a boardroom 6,000 miles away with no requirement to consider the long-term wellbeing of the people or the land, was no way to run things. And yet why did it remain the case for so long? Because people in power were making massive profits.

In an era when the world is being run by a corporate mogul out of the White House, the history of the East India Company has never been more timely. The story of how a single corporation managed to conquer a state and enslave a people is one that needs to be heard. **H**

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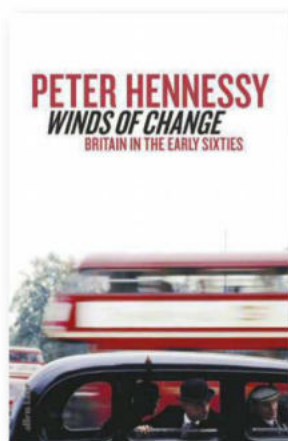


Elaborate fencing
British prime minister Harold Macmillan, right, with French president Charles de Gaulle in 1960

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ALWYN TURNER breezes through a magisterial history of high politics at a time when Britain oversaw the dismantling of its empire – and urgently sought access to the EEC



**Winds of Change:
Britain in the
Early Sixties**

by Peter Hennessy
Allen Lane, 624 pages, £30

“We are living in a jet age,” declared Harold Wilson in 1964, “but we are governed by an

Edwardian establishment mentality.” It was a widely shared perception.

Through the 1950s, pressure had been building for structural change in Britain, and

as the new decade dawned a cultural impatience with the old order was everywhere apparent. Angry young men and kitchen-sink dramatists were writing bestselling novels and mass-market movies, pop art was moving from galleries into high-street fashion, sitcoms and satirists were mocking the establishment. Above all, Lew Grade and ITV were demolishing the paternalism of a BBC still in thrall to John Reith’s credo: “I do not pretend to give the public what it wants.” Between 1960 and 1965, just one BBC show reached the top of the weekly charts – and that was when the corporation ventured into enemy territory with *Club Night*, broadcast from a workingmen’s club in Stockport.

Politics, on the other hand, seemed stuck in an era of gentlemen amateurs. At the time of Wilson’s speech, the prime minister was Alec Douglas-Home, drafted reluctantly into the premiership. He later murmured sadly of the experience: “Terrible intrusion into one’s private life.” By contrast, the US president was Lyndon B Johnson, at whose professionalism foreign secretary RA Butler could only marvel: “Politics was his hobby and his life.”

Even so, Wilson’s verdict on a Conservative government that was by then in its 13th year was harsh. As Peter Hennessy shows in his magisterial new study – following on from earlier volumes on Britain in the 1940s and 50s, *Never Again* and *Having It So Good*

– there were many leading Tories who knew they had to adjust to the new world and were endeavouring to do so.

Chief among them was the figure who dominates this book: Harold Macmillan, prime minister from 1957–63. The problems he faced were daunting. It was on his watch that the British empire was largely dismantled, a programme of postcolonial independence that managed to stay one step ahead of the “wind of change” he’d identified as blowing through Africa. The mostly peaceful nature of that process, emerging from the shadow of Churchill’s imperialism, was the greatest achievement of his administration.

Macmillan’s eyes, though, were on a still higher prize. It was he who concluded that the future lay not with the Commonwealth but in membership of the European Economic Community. The application to join the EEC was later described by Britain’s main negotiator, Edward Heath, as “the end of a glorious era, that of the British empire, and the beginning of a whole new chapter of British history”. Which was precisely what Macmillan intended. He faced, however, a serious obstacle in the shape of French president Charles de Gaulle, whose sense of national destiny was equalled only by his distrust of the Anglo-Saxon mindset. The encounters between them were respectful, even fond, but wary, “the elaborate fencing of the two history-infused old men”. They left de Gaulle unpersuaded that Britain would fit in: he concluded that “the nature, structure, circumstances peculiar to England, are different from those of the other continents”, and Macmillan’s plans came to nought.

Rejection by the EEC also prevented the prime minister achieving his domestic ambitions. Since the war, the economy had grown steadily, but not as fast as those of France, Germany, Japan or the US, with British productivity failing to improve. Joining Europe was a key part of finding a way forward, along with a drive towards world trade, the embrace of new technology, the modernisation of the economy and greater state planning. Progress was made in some areas – a big hospital-building programme, the creation of new universities – but productivity remained stubbornly set on the same middling course.

And while Macmillan pursued his grand design of realigning Britain within the western world, there was the lurking fear that the future he was planning for might not actually happen. In 1962, the Cuban missile crisis made all too clear the threat posed to humanity by what was known as “the Bomb”, and which he referred to as “the nuclear”.

By 1963, now 69 years old, the prime minister was looking weary. Then came the

Profumo scandal, a double whammy of sex and spies that saw the government painted as sleazy. (It also prompted de Gaulle to remark: “That’ll teach the English for trying to behave like Frenchmen.”) After Macmillan fell ill in the late summer, he bowed out in October, his vision unrealised. “Had he pulled it off,” Hennessy judges, “Harold Macmillan would have gone down as one of the great British prime ministers.”

If history were tidy, Macmillan would have been followed by the meritocratic modernism of Wilson’s white heat. Instead, there was the

// The Profumo scandal’s double whammy of sex and spies prompted de Gaulle to remark: ‘That’ll teach the English for trying to behave like Frenchmen’ //

unsatisfactory coda of Douglas-Home’s premiership, as the long period of Tory government eked out its last months.

This is a splendid, rewarding book, a portrait of a time when politicians could still think on a grand scale, when a prime minister could say his colleagues were “equal in intelligence and energy to any cabinet of the past”, when a civil servant not only spoke six languages but could lip-read in three.

Although the book’s focus is primarily on the highest of high politics, it’s enlivened by personal memory. It opens with the 15-year-old Hennessy trudging through snowdrifts to grammar school in the bitter winter of 1963, and we are aware throughout that this is the perspective of what one of his friends refers to as “the Butler Act generation”. Britain has always had an “emotional deficit with Europe”, he writes, and even when Heath eventually took us into the EEC, it didn’t “provide an emotional surrogate for the British empire”. He recognises in himself this coming together of history, patriotism and kin, so that when he hears Helmut Kohl dismiss Britain as having “won a war but lost an empire and their economy”, he feels the taunt rankle in his heart and mind. But there’s still room to note the important things in life: the introduction of one-day cricket “led to an improvement in fielding”. **H**

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Alwyn Turner’s books include *A Classless Society: Britain in the 1990s* (Aurum Press, 2013)

AUTHORS ON THE PODCAST

Suzannah Lipscomb on women in Reformation-era France

“Even when they didn’t get what they wanted, the fact is that they were demonstrating so much agency in order to try and get it in the first place. So it makes us think again about notions of women being completely oppressed. Women did have power in a very quotidian way and they could use it in their domestic circumstances.”



Roger Moorhouse on why Poland was defeated by the German invaders in 1939

“Comparative, on a world scale, the Polish army was actually a well equipped, numerous and well supplied body of men. And they had a good plan in 1939. The problem was that their allies deserted them and they were facing the most advanced technologically, numerically, and in terms of military doctrine, military force on the planet in the Germans. That was the fundamental problem.”



Tom Holland on how Christianity has shaped the western mindset

“The paradox of Christianity is that it simultaneously inspires people to aspire to conquer the whole world, to bring the whole world to Christ, while also suffering from the anxiety that doing that is somehow to betray the example of the crucifixion. That’s a tension and a paradox that continues to lie at the heart of the west today. It may be secularised but it is still absolutely there.”

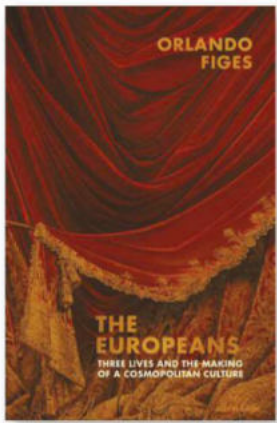


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Plus ça change

TIM BLANNING enjoys an exhilarating whirl through the culture shifts of 19th-century Europe, centred on the closely entwined lives of an intriguing ménage à trois



**The Europeans:
Three Lives and
the Making of
a Cosmopolitan
Culture**

by Orlando Figes
Allen Lane, 576 pages, £30

The French poet
Charles Péguy was one
of the earliest victims

of the First World War when he died on 5 September 1914, shot through the head by a German sniper. One of his last recorded observations was that the world had changed more since he started going to school in the 1880s than since the fall of the Roman empire. In this exhilarating whirl through 19th-century Europe, Orlando Figes demonstrates why Péguy felt the ground was shifting beneath his feet. Mapping material change can be a draining experience, but here it is given a human face by being viewed through the closely entwined lives of an intriguing ménage à trois: opera singer Pauline Viardot (1821–1910), her complaisant husband Louis (1800–83) and the Russian writer Ivan Turgenev (1818–83).

Not the least of many beneficial changes they all experienced was a revolution in transport. The opening of the railway line between Paris and Brussels in 1846 slashed the journey time from two days to 12 hours. A decade later, it was possible to get from Paris to Marseille (c750km) in less than a day. A generation after that and our three protagonists were travelling all over Europe more quickly, comfortably and cheaply.

This new ease of travel also had some unexpected cultural impacts. The ability of middle-class patrons to nip in from the suburbs for evening music recitals and performances affected the repertoire selected. Among many other things, it brought an end to the craze for Rossini, who would only travel by horse and carriage and whose music, as Figes puts it with characteristic flair, “was firmly rooted in the world before railways: it was small-scale, it went along with the light clip-clop of a horse and carriage”. He is contrasted with Giacomo

Meyerbeer, the first great composer of ‘grand opera’, who loved to compose while travelling on the railways so much that “you can hear their pulse in his music”.

Another technological innovation to benefit Pauline Viardot in particular was photography. André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri’s invention in 1854 of a way of mass-producing portraits – she was number 69 in his gallery – brought her closer to her hordes of fans. By the early 1860s, around 400

million photographic cards of celebrities were being sold every year in Britain alone.

This substantial but always entertaining book should enchant anyone interested in the cultural revolutions of the 19th century. The only discordant note is struck by the author’s determination to cram these changes into the concept of the “cosmopolitan culture” of the sub-title. His own evidence demonstrates that the material changes did not foster pan-European attitudes but rather intensified nationalist passions, even among the highly educated. He quotes with approval the globe-trotting Mark Twain’s optimistic observation that “travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness”, but also the equally peripatetic Turgenev’s expostulation: “I cannot tell you how deeply I hate everything French and especially Parisian.” **H**

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Tim Blanning’s books include *The Pursuit of Glory: Europe 1648–1815* (Allen Lane, 2007)

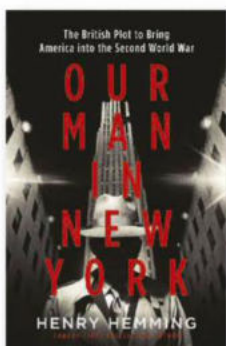
// The Paris–Brussels railway opened in 1846, slashing the journey time from two days to 12 hours. Soon our trio could travel cheaply all over Europe //



Increasing her range An 1861 portrait of the opera singer and composer Pauline Viardot, who benefited from the rise of mass-produced photographic cards which brought her closer to her hordes of fans

SECOND WORLD WAR

Father of fake news

**Our Man in New York**

by Henry Hemming

Quercus, 384 pages, £19.99

William Stephenson was one of history's greatest spymasters. Sent by Winston Churchill to

New York in June 1940, he arguably did more than anyone to swing sceptical US public opinion behind Britain and ensure Allied victory in the Second World War.

Author Henry Hemming's interest in his subject was sparked because his grandparents knew Stephenson. Whatever his motives, Hemming is a first-class writer, and his book delves more deeply into Stephenson's activities than ever before, delivering the tale in exciting and authoritative style.

Before getting into espionage, Stephenson, a Canadian, had led an enthralling life as a First World War flying ace. Between the wars, he made a fortune in business and got to know Churchill – who, once he was prime minister, arranged for his friend to become the overlord of British intelligence in the US.

Stephenson arrived in the States at a grim moment. Thrown off the European mainland

and threatened with invasion, Britain seemed set to lose the war. Moreover, a powerful lobby led by aviator Charles Lindbergh was agitating to keep the US out of the conflict.

Churchill tasked Stephenson to use any and all methods to bring the vast resources of the US into the fight against Hitler. Stephenson set to work with a will, establishing an office in Manhattan and cheerfully ignoring diplomatic rules to fight a propaganda war paid for from his own deep pockets.

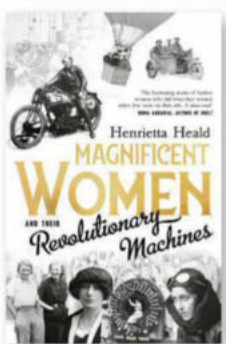
Stephenson fought on many fronts. He bribed, coerced or persuaded newspaper columnists to write pieces favouring the Allied cause. He made contacts within the Roosevelt administration. He even founded a spy school, Camp X, in Canada, where agents were trained to spy on US institutions. Controversially, he created a forgery factory to fake documents, maps and plans suggesting the Nazis directly threatened America. Finally, Stephenson encouraged the US to create its own external espionage agency, the OSS. Hemming plausibly credits Stephenson with being both the godfather of today's CIA and a pioneer of fake news.

Largely thanks to Stephenson's efforts, Lindbergh and his America First isolationists were silenced in the wake of Pearl Harbor, and the Americans went willingly to war. **H**

.....
Nigel Jones, author of several books including *Countdown to Valkyrie* (Frontline, 2008)

WOMEN'S HISTORY

Smooth operators

**Magnificent Women and Their Revolutionary Machines**

by Henrietta Heald

Unbound, 400 pages, £20

"My dear, for sheer exciting experience, give me a

town to light – 70 miles an hour belts and 320 volts on the board with a well-soaked cement floor," said the engineer Margaret Mary Partidge. "And then remember you are the responsible engineer for the whole lot, and there isn't another soul within 20 miles at least who understands the switchboard!"

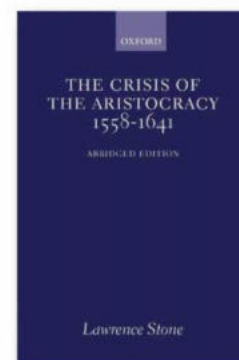
A century ago, the Women's Engineering Society was founded. This well-written, vigorous account shows how Britain's female engineers were key figures in modernisation – both of the country and of attitudes to women. The society's central figures, Katharine and Rachel Parsons and Caroline Haslett,

are given their due attention in this volume. Each was an impressive figure: Caroline and Katharine were leading figures in the development of electrification, while Rachel was the first woman to start the course for the mechanical sciences tripos at Cambridge. Disappointment with the anti-women stance of the trade unions even led her to run as a Conservative parliamentary candidate.

Some men also played positive roles. Herbert Schofield, principal of Loughborough Technical Institute from 1915 to 1950, was a keen supporter of training women in engineering skills, and encouraged the formation of Atalanta Ltd, the first engineering company run by women. One of his first female entrants was Claudia Parsons – later the first woman to circumnavigate the world in a car. Frustrated with the opportunities on offer, lit up by a taste for adventure, Claudia was typical of the impressive women discussed in this book. **H**

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Jeremy Black, professor of history at the University of Exeter

Susan Doran lauds a monumental study of the lives of the English nobility

**The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641**

by Lawrence Stone

(Clarendon Press, 1965)

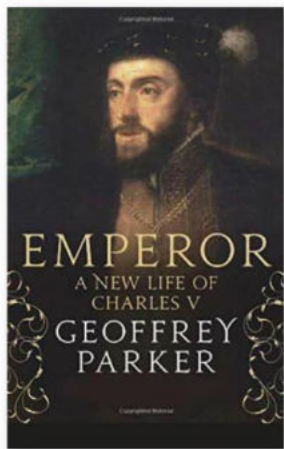
In this work of more than 800 pages, Lawrence Stone examines the power – political, economic and social – and the "mind and manners" of the English nobility from the reign of Elizabeth I until the outbreak of the Civil War. Although his central thesis no longer holds water, the broad canvas and holistic approach make this monumental book his masterpiece and a classic that should continue to be enjoyed. It is a tour de force in its scholarship and imagination.

As the title implies, Stone saw the period under review as a time of crisis – particularly a crisis of confidence – for the aristocracy. Over the century, Stone argued, the ancient noble code of conduct and aristocratic way of life underwent severe stress, culminating in catastrophic breakdown in the Civil War. This broad conclusion has been the catalyst for a number of detailed studies on individual noblemen that have refined or contradicted his argument. Nonetheless, his lucid and lively description of the environment, both material and cultural, of the nobility remains stimulating and offers readers fascinating insights into their lives. There are sections on their conspicuous expenditure (on clothes, buildings and tombs, for instance), marriage, sexual morality, education, cultural patronage and religion. Awe-inspiring in its mastery of information, Stone's book – groundbreaking when first written – deserves reading still. **H**

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Professor Susan Doran is a senior research fellow at Jesus College and St Benet's Hall, Oxford. Her most recent book is *Elizabeth I and Her Circle* (OUP, 2015)

God-given right to rule

JOHN EDWARDS welcomes a triumphant portrait of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor – from whose complex, extraordinary life a very human story emerges



Emperor: A New Life of Charles V
by Geoffrey Parker
Yale UP, 760 pages, £25

King of Spain, Holy Roman Emperor and ruler of many other territories, Charles V presented himself as a highly traditional

Christian ruler. Very publicly religious, he was often portrayed in armour and on horseback, ceaselessly travelling through Europe, and twice to north Africa, to defend 'Christendom'. He was and is sometimes seen as a very modern global ruler. His first, great chief minister, Mercurino Arborio de Gattinara, fed him the idea that he was, or would be, 'monarch of the world', and he seems to have believed this, despite the opposition he met in virtually all his enterprises.

Charles was born in Ghent, modern-day Belgium, in 1500, and lived for 58 years. Given the staggering complexity of his life and achievements, it is brave for a historian to attempt a biography. While many have tried, Geoffrey Parker has succeeded triumphantly. The size of his book should not deter readers wanting to understand a complex political figure who dedicated his life, in a way that now seems unfashionable to some, to holding together a multinational and multilingual European society, which was sometimes run from Brussels.

Parker writes clearly and vividly, adopting a chronological approach to Charles's life, which is interspersed with verbal portraits of the man at various stages in his life, from youth to maturity, and is supported by massive documentation from original and secondary sources, as well as maps, genealogical tables and a rich variety of well-chosen illustrations.

What emerges is the intricate and very human story of a flawed but highly motivated individual, who seems to have found at least 48 hours in every day. He spent many hours in church, and many in the hunting field or travelling. At a time when European royal families, not least the Tudors, often had great



Battle royal Charles V in a 1556 allegory of the Holy Roman Empire. He believed he was 'monarch of the world', despite the opposition he encountered in virtually all his enterprises

// This highly motivated figure dedicated his life to holding together a multinational and multilingual European society //

difficulty procreating, Charles fathered five legitimate children as well as four (at least) who were illegitimate, by women from various European countries. All of this is duly noted in Parker's often elegant prose. In addition, for most of his life, Charles suffered from bad health, including influenza and gout, as well as a series of riding injuries.

Many Europeans had good reason to dislike Charles as he pursued his chosen course through life, which he firmly believed

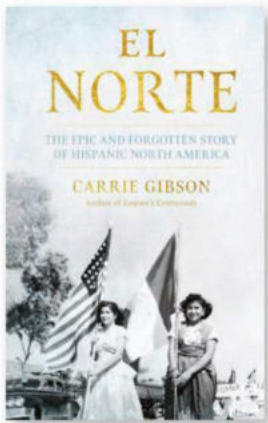
to be God-given. He had numerous enemies in France, Protestant Germany and, ironically, in papal Rome – and was hated by many Spanish colonists and native Americans, whose lives and resources were ruthlessly exploited during his reign. His whole existence may be seen as a battle, both physical and spiritual. He died, exhausted, in the Jeronymite friary at Yuste in western Spain. He had retired there in 1556, having performed the remarkable feat, unique at the time, of abdicating the rule of his many territories, and handing them over to his son Philip II of Spain and his brother Ferdinand, the new emperor.

Even Parker's deeply thoughtful and meticulous scholarship cannot make Charles a likeable person, but his story is worth reading in itself, and perhaps as a parable for our times. **H**

John Edwards is senior research fellow in Spanish at the University of Oxford. His books include *Mary I: England's Catholic Queen* (Yale, 2011)

Promised land

SARAH PEARSALL praises a lucid and engrossing account of the long, rich history of Hispanic people in North America



El Norte: The Epic and Forgotten Story of Hispanic North America
by Carrie Gibson

Atlantic Monthly Press,
576 pages, £20

Invasions have long worried people living on the border between

the United States and Mexico. “We were wholly unprepared, politically, educationally, and socially when the avalanche... fell upon us,” one observed in the 1920s. In fact, these were the words of a Mexican-American in Texas about the sudden, discomfiting presence of Anglo-Americans. The statement appears in a pioneering master’s thesis by Jovita González in 1930; after interviewing locals, González fretted that – although Tejanos (Mexican Texans) had occupied the land for centuries – the newly arrived “Anglo-Americans... look down upon Mexicans... as interlopers, undesirable aliens and a menace to the community”.

Such claims are all too familiar now, almost a century later. Carrie Gibson conceived of her important book in 2012, but, as she notes, recent political events and rhetoric have given it “new urgency: there is a dire need to talk about the Hispanic history of the United States”.

Gibson’s capacious narrative covers a dizzying range of times and places, from early Spanish conquistadores and Spanish colonies, to Mexican-American relations, Puerto Rican migration and recent events. This history runs deep and rich and long. Overall, Gibson’s point is convincing: there is a significant Hispanic past throughout what is now the United States. This history, far from being merely a regional one, has underpinned the development and shape of the US overall, even in locations far from the border such as New York and Missouri.

Gibson gives a human face to broad processes of settlement, colonisation, war and international relations. We know already about the shift in Mexico’s fortunes after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican-American War in 1848. Gibson personalises this story by highlighting the

frustrations of Juan Cortina, whose border-land family lost a great deal of land in the war. “I never signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo,” he complained. There are tales of women like Isabel González, an unmarried, pregnant Puerto Rican who tried to move to the United States in 1902. Her case became the focus for a major legal challenge about the treatment of Puerto Ricans under US immigration law. The supreme court ultimately declared that Puerto Ricans could not be treated as “aliens”, though they were still denied full citizenship. This uncomfortable compromise gave González the right to remain in New York, but she criticised its limitations. These narratives are engrossing, and also make clear the great importance of Hispanic people to the history of the US.

The word ‘Hispanic’ emphasises the Spanish lineage in a way that some readers may find troubling. It means that Native American histories are often underplayed, as in Gibson’s account of the Pueblo Revolt, an uprising of indigenous people against

// A significant Hispanic past has underpinned the development of what is now the US – even in places far from the border, like New York and Missouri //

Spanish colonisers in New Mexico in 1680. It can also be challenging to keep up with the many diverse trajectories included here. Nevertheless, Gibson’s book is a lucid, compelling and wide-ranging analysis, which reminds us all of the enduring importance of “Hispanic North America”. **H**

Sarah MS Pearsall teaches early American history at the University of Cambridge

Casting a spell

Philippa Gregory on *Tidelands*, her story of witch-mania in the midst of the Civil War

What was it like to be a woman on the fringes of society during the Civil War?

Women were involved in the politics of the time, especially in petitions and riots. They enlisted as ‘she-soldiers’, and served in local militia to keep both armies away from their villages or towns. They bore the brunt of sieges, left to defend houses when men had gone to join the armies, and – as ever – suffered personal and sexual abuse as part of military terrorism. My heroine lives in a village where loyalties are divided between the lord of the manor, a royalist who houses a royalist spy, and her brother, a soldier returned from Cromwell’s New Model Army. She, like many people of the time, knows little about the politics behind the war, but her very survival is affected by the breakdown of society it causes.

Why did witch-fever take root in England at this time?

Continental theories about witches spread into England and combined with home-grown misogyny. It reflected the fears of a society divided by civil war, where the usual instruments of repression – the monarchy, courts and church – had lost control. From the time of Elizabeth, there had been growing suspicion of women, which we see in rules against female vagrancy. At the same time, male physicians were trying to exclude women healers from medicine by accusing them of unscientific practices. This was a time for public violence against recalcitrant women: ‘swimming’ a witch was very similar to ‘ducking’ a scold and both were allowed in law.

What do you think are the key ingredients of a historical novel?

Firstly and lastly: research. People read historical fiction to get an accurate and vivid picture of the time. It’s a wonderful form that deserves

to be taken seriously in its own right.

Tidelands
by Philippa Gregory
(Simon & Schuster,
448 pages, £20)



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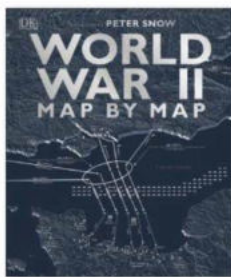
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WW2

World War II: Map by Map
(foreword by Peter Snow)
(DK, 288 pages, £25)

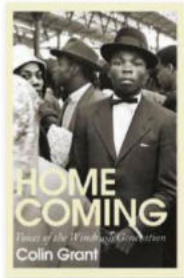


Navigating conflict

The sheer scale and complexity of the Second World War can be a stumbling block for even experienced military historians, with precise details of battles and troop movements sometimes being difficult to follow. Thankfully, this new reference book should prove a useful tool for experts and casual readers alike, boasting more than 100 maps explaining key events such as D-Day and the siege of Leningrad.

20TH CENTURY

Homecoming: Voices of the Windrush Generation
by Colin Grant
(Jonathan Cape, 320 pages, £20)

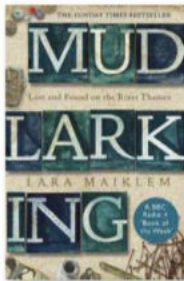


New arrivals

Although its name is now associated with a recent political scandal, the arrival of the *Windrush* remains a watershed moment in the story of Britain. Interspersed with the author's own stories of being raised by Jamaican parents in Luton, this impressive work of oral history documents the lives of postwar Caribbean migrants, covering topics ranging from interracial relationships to the first Notting Hill Carnival.

LONDON

Mudlarking: Lost and Found on the River Thames
by Lara Maiklem
(Bloomsbury Circus, 336 pages, £18.99)

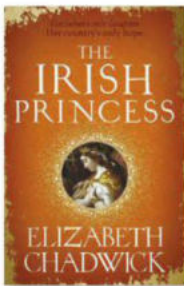


Going with the flow

For centuries, Londoners have scoured the banks of the Thames in search of treasures. Following the river from west to east, modern-day 'mudlark' Lara Maiklem reveals the histories behind artefacts she has retrieved, and the ways in which her hobby has changed her life. From tales of Tudor footwear to missing military medals, it's an unconventional – yet engaging – look at the capital's past.

FICTION

The Irish Princess
by Elizabeth Chadwick
(Sphere, 480 pages, £20)

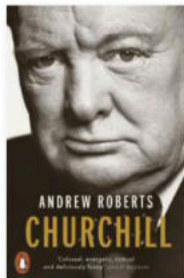


Gaelic drama

Having recently completed a trilogy of novels exploring the life of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Elizabeth Chadwick turns her attentions to another 12th-century noblewoman: Aoife MacMurchada, daughter of Diarmait, King of Leinster in Ireland. Chadwick's book paints a vivid picture of medieval politics, while detailing Aoife's struggles as she becomes part of her father's plans to secure an alliance with Henry II.

BIOGRAPHY

Churchill: Walking with Destiny
by Andrew Roberts
(Penguin, 1,106 pages, £14.99)
NOW IN PAPERBACK



Larger than life

So much has been written about Winston Churchill's leadership and personal qualities that it's fair to wonder if there's anything new to be said. This weighty biography allays those fears as Andrew Roberts draws on newly available sources. Charting First World War disaster and Second World War triumph, it's a detailed and compelling look at the real life of a towering historical figure.

SOCIAL

A Biography of Loneliness
by Fay Bound Alberti
(Oxford, 320 pages, £20)

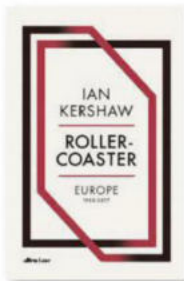


Together, alone

Despite humanity's burgeoning population – up by almost a quarter since 2000 – studies suggest the number of people who feel lonely in Britain and the US is also increasing. This book examines the history of the emotion, arguing that it has its roots in modernity's emergence in the 19th century. Other chapters skew to the modern, but the book also explores historical widowhood and the tragic life of Sylvia Plath.

20TH CENTURY

Roller-Coaster: Europe 1950–2017
by Ian Kershaw
(Penguin, 704 pages, £12.99)
NOW IN PAPERBACK

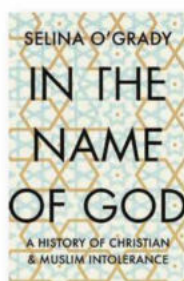


Continental shifts

Spanning almost 70 years, an entire continent, and the disciplines of history and current affairs, this account of Europe since 1950 – now out in paperback – is ambitious stuff. Yet Ian Kershaw is a masterful guide, offering insightful analysis as the EU expands, the Berlin Wall falls and the Soviet Union unravels. Recent episodes, from the 2008 financial crash to the migrant crisis, bring the story up to date.

RELIGION

In the Name of God: A History of Christian & Muslim Intolerance
by Selina O'Grady
(Atlantic, 480 pages, £25)



Faith and hate

Which historical factors and figures contributed to current tensions between Islam and Christianity? That's one of the questions at the heart of this study of interfaith intolerance that ranges from the classical world to the present day, and from Muslim Spain to Christian America. Great religious and political forces rage, but the narrative never loses sight of the persecuted – nor their persecutors. **H**

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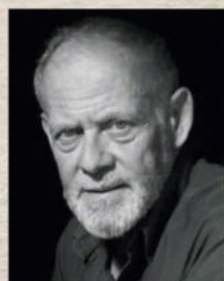
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A night on the rails

Londoners seek shelter in Aldwych underground station during the Blitz. Although the station closed in the 1990s, a replica of the ticket hall appears in the Hidden London exhibition



ENCOUNTERS

82 DIARY: LISTEN / WATCH / VISIT

By Jon Bauckham and Jonathan Wright

88 EXPLORE... Lavenham, Suffolk

VISIT

Going underground

Tales from deep beneath the streets of the capital will be the focus of a major new exhibition opening at the London Transport Museum this autumn.

Running until 2021, *Hidden London* will shine a light on some of the 'secret' areas of the underground from the 19th century to the present day, featuring an array of archive photographs, diagrams, posters and interactive exhibits.

As well as a replica of the ticket hall at Aldwych station, closed to passengers in 1994, visitors will have the opportunity to explore a faithful re-creation of the dining room in Winston Churchill's bunker at Down Street station, Mayfair, where the prime minister took shelter during the Blitz.

Continuing the wartime theme, visitors can also discover the story of the Plessey aircraft factory, where 2,000 workers – mostly women – built components for Allied planes in an unfinished section of the Central line.

The exhibition forms part of a wider programme of events that includes the launch of a *Hidden London* book and a series of guided tours, exploring disused tube stations and parts of the network normally closed to the public.

Hidden London: The Exhibition

London Transport Museum / 11 October – January 2021 / ltmuseum.co.uk/whats-on



WATCH

Imperious ruler

In 1762, Catherine the Great became the empress of Russia, a country she would rule as a despot, albeit one guided by the ideas of the Enlightenment, until her death in 1796. It's a reign explored in a lavish and much-anticipated four-part drama starring Dame Helen Mirren (above), no stranger to playing royals, notably her Oscar-winning turn as Elizabeth II in *The Queen*.

Central to this portrayal of tumultuous years that profoundly shaped subsequent Russian history is the relationship between Catherine and Grigory Potemkin (Jason Clarke), shown as Catherine's political and romantic soulmate yet a man she was unable to marry.

Catherine the Great

Sky Atlantic / Scheduled for 3 October



An 1855 edition of *The Works of Aristotle*. Despite its title, the book was a guide to sexual health

VISIT

Beyond hysterical

Misconceptions about women's health have had profound cultural implications throughout history. From ancient Greece to Victorian Britain, myths surrounding childbirth, menstruation and the menopause have been used to demean women as being at the mercy of their biology.

A free exhibition at the Royal College of Nursing Scotland explores how attitudes have changed over time, with items on display ranging from a modern cervical screening kit to so-called 'anti-hysteria' pills.

The Wandering Womb

RCN Scotland, Edinburgh / Until 31 October / Free entry / rcn.org.uk/library/exhibitions-and-events

LISTEN

The art of eavesdropping

Based in the suburbs of Cheltenham, the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), pictured below, provides signals intelligence for the UK's government and armed forces, and also works to ensure the country's own communications are secure.

The story of how it came to have these tasks is told by Gordon Corera, BBC security correspondent, in a two-part documentary series marking GCHQ's centenary. Over the past 100 years, Corera relates, GCHQ has listened in on the country's enemies – and at times its own citizens.



The Secret History of GCHQ

BBC Radio 4 / Scheduled for 21 October

WEEKLY TV & RADIO

Visit historyextra.com for weekly updates on upcoming TV and radio programmes



A 1790 caricature by John Nixon, depicting society figures attending the Commemoration of Handel music festival at Westminster Abbey

VISIT

Raising the curtain

Britain has a long theatrical tradition, but it wasn't until the 18th century that the experience of going to 'see a show' began to resemble something that spectators might recognise today.

Featuring more than 100 artefacts, a new exhibition at London's Foundling Museum explores the history of theatre during the Georgian period and the growing popularity of live performance more generally. From the playhouses of Drury Lane to summer festivals out in the provinces, visitors can learn about the roles of actors, set designers and ticket sellers alike, and discover how audiences differed from those of today.

The exhibition also delves into the story of the Foundling Hospital Chapel, in which composer George Frideric Handel hosted annual benefit concerts to raise money for the children's home and its residents.

Two Last Nights! Show Business in Georgian Britain

The Foundling Museum, London / Until 5 January 2020 / foundlingmuseum.org.uk/events/two-last-nights

HISTORY ON THE BOX

“Private Eye was listed as ‘fake news’ on an academic site that was used by the American government”



Private Eye editor and long-standing *Have I Got News for You* panellist **IAN HISLOP** tells us about his upcoming BBC Four documentary, which explores the phenomenon of fake news from a historical perspective

Catching Britain's Killers looks at how DNA profiling was first used to snare a killer in Leicestershire

WATCH

Legal matters

There are killings that, beyond the personal tragedies they represent, have a far wider impact on society. Three such murders are the subject of an ambitious new series that looks at how the investigations into these crimes affected the wider criminal justice system.

The first episode goes back to 1983 and 1986, when two girls in Leicestershire were attacked and killed in similar circumstances. A crucial breakthrough in the cases came through the use of DNA profiling, the first time the technique was used to identify a murderer. The programme then takes a broad look at the creation of Britain's DNA database, the first in the world.

The second episode focuses on mother Ann Ming's campaign to overturn the law of double jeopardy after the prosecution failed to secure the conviction of her daughter's killer, Billy Dunlop. Finally, the series chronicles how the wrongful conviction of three teenagers in 1970s – convictions based on later-retracted confessions – led to suspects being granted new rights.

Catching Britain's Killers: The Crimes That Changed Us

BBC Two / Scheduled for October

Your programme mainly focuses on the US. Why is that?

The central thesis is that the adoption of the steam printing press in America meant you got these vast circulation newspapers for the first time. And this technological leap is equivalent to the internet providing a very different platform today – huge numbers and different sorts of readers.

The second reason is that the fake news explosion started in America. Although the term itself was essentially popularised by Trump, who hijacked it to describe anything he didn't like, the fake news we're talking about consists of deliberately disseminated stories.

You start with a story about flying bat-people on the Moon, featured in New York tabloid *The Sun* in the 1830s. That's amusing, but things soon get more serious. Why does this happen?

People print [the silly] stuff *because you can* and it obviously makes a great deal of money. Then proprietors think: “If I can fool people over the Moon then I can probably start influencing them over something more serious.”

The Spanish-American War [when the US invaded Cuba, in 1898] was essentially started by newspapers competing for circulation. That is the point where you get people trying to influence opinion for political ends, and that becomes more dangerous.

The film argues that fake news causes significant problems for the authorities...

When British propaganda says: “The Hun is so beastly he's boiling down cadavers”, in the First World War, people believe it, because it's our chaps printing it. But when the Second World War comes, when some-

thing really horrific is happening and there are factories with human bodies inside, there's a resistance to believing it because you've poisoned the well of the truth.

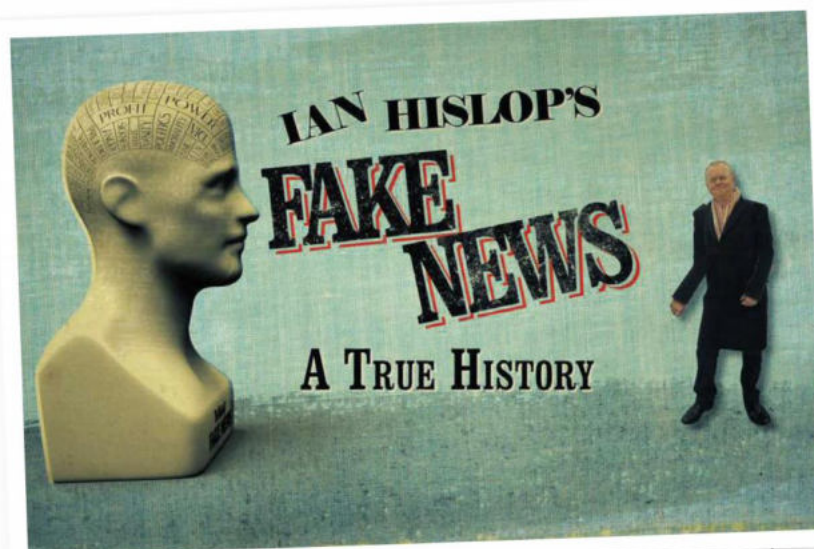
Did this make you think afresh about your work as a satirist?

It did make me think. I genuinely find it disturbing that people say what is blatantly propaganda or fake news is ‘satire’. As a satirist, you are announcing what your intention is. That's part of the problem with the internet as a platform – things are taken out of context. If you buy *Private Eye*, you know what we're doing. But if you take out a headline and put it online, there is a possibility that someone might believe it.

In fact, *Private Eye* was once listed as ‘fake news’ on an academic site that was used by the American government, which really made me laugh. I had to explain that I didn't have a source for the piece we'd run about the turkey at Thanksgiving pardoning Trump, because it didn't happen!

Ian Hislop's Fake News:

A True History is scheduled to be shown on BBC Four on 7 October



Ian Hislop's documentary lifts the lid on the history of fake news and its real-world consequences



We added redcurrants and blueberries when testing out the recipe

TASTE

Whim-wham

Resembling a trifle, but far easier (and significantly quicker) to make, this boozy Scottish dessert is believed to date back to the 18th century. Much like 'trifle', the term 'whim-wham' was traditionally used north of the border to denote something light and fanciful.

That being said, your own whim-wham can end up being quite the opposite, depending on the amount of brandy and sherry you decide to use.

Difficulty: 2/10 / **Time:** 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

25g butter
50g blanched almonds
25g sugar
30 trifle sponge fingers
150ml sweet sherry
60ml brandy
300ml fresh double cream
300g natural yoghurt
Juice and rind of one large orange

METHOD

Melt the butter in a pan and fry the almonds until golden brown. Add the sugar and cook for one minute, stirring continuously, until the sugar dissolves and the almonds are well coated. Tip onto a greased baking sheet and leave on the side to cool.

Meanwhile, break the sponge fingers in half and place them into a serving bowl. Pour the sherry, brandy, orange juice and rind over the pieces and leave to soak for 30 minutes.

Whip the cream until it just holds its shape, then fold in the yoghurt before spooning over the sponge. Roughly chop the almonds, sprinkle on top of the dessert, and serve immediately.
Recipe from cookitsimply.com

WATCH

Undercover conflict

His ability to convey ambiguity in a single facial expression probably does much to explain why actor Damian Lewis was chosen to play Nick Brody – an American soldier whose backstory involved suspicions he had been turned while being held prisoner by al-Qaeda – in the hit drama *Homeland*.

It also probably explains why Lewis is now fronting an eight-part factual series focusing on conflict in the shadows: the world of international espionage as it has played out over the past 40 years.

Individual episodes include the story that inspired Ben Affleck's Oscar-winning movie *Argo* – a tale of how, in 1980, the CIA and the Canadian government rescued American diplomats from revolutionary Iran at a time when many of their colleagues were held as hostages. Other episodes nod back to the days of the Cold War, and there are also stories from the 'War on Terror' during the 2000s.

The series mixes dramatic reconstructions with interviews with former spies and experts. It was filmed on location in Moscow, Israel and London.

Damian Lewis: *Spy Wars*

History / Scheduled for 7 October



Homeland star Damian Lewis delves into the murky world of international espionage in *Spy Wars*

VISIT

East to west

To mark the Rugby World Cup and the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic games in Japan, the British Museum has collaborated with the country's Nara Prefecture to bring a collection of sacred objects to the UK for the first time.

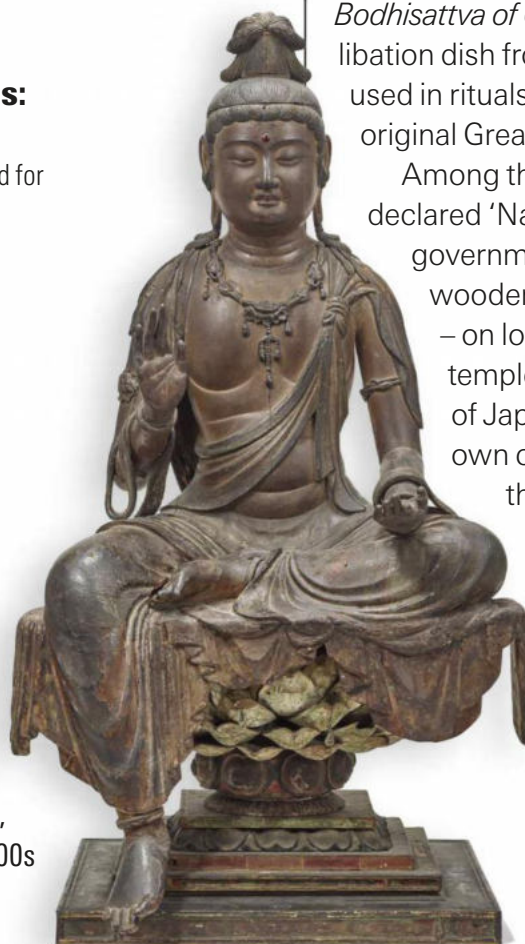
Displayed across two separate rooms, the Buddhist and Shinto items include the gilt bronze sculpture *Bodhisattva of Compassion*, dating from c700 AD, and a libation dish from the same period thought to have been used in rituals performed at the dedication of Nara's original Great Buddha statue.

Among the 15 items on show, five have been declared 'National Treasures' by the Japanese government, the most recent being a pair of wooden sculptures known as the *Heavenly Kings* – on loan from the eighth-century Tōshōdai-ji temple. To put the objects in context, a number of Japanese paintings from the British Museum's own collections are also displayed throughout the rooms.

Nara: Sacred Images from Early Japan

British Museum, London / Until 24 November / Free entry / britishmuseum.org

A seated *Bodhisattva*, (a person on the path to Buddhahood), dating to the 1100s





Asian factory workers strike in Leicester, May 1974

VISIT

Making a stand

In May 1974, more than 500 Asian employees at Leicester's Imperial Typewriters factory went on strike, citing poor conditions, low pay and institutional racism. To heighten tensions further, the trade unions refused to give the workers their backing, leading many to accuse them too of discrimination. Featuring new archival research and an array of oral history interviews, a 45th-anniversary exhibition tells the story of the dispute, and the battle against adversity as the strikers took to the picket lines.

The Strike at Imperial Typewriters

Newarke Houses Museum, Leicester / Until 26 October / Free entry / strikeatimperial.net

VISIT

History live

Dozens of Britain's top historians will be appearing at two **BBC History Magazine** events this autumn. Taking place at Chester Town Hall from 25–27 October, and Winchester Guildhall from 1–3 November, speakers scheduled to appear at this year's History Weekends include Babita Sharma, Dan Jones and Suzannah Lipscomb. Talks can be booked individually, while day tickets allowing admission for several talks are also available.

BBC History Magazine's History Weekends

25–27 October, Chester Town Hall / 1–3 November, Winchester Guildhall / historyextra.com/events



WATCH

Shakespeare remixed

If any further evidence of Netflix's influence on film and TV production were needed, it arrives at the London Film Festival this October, with screenings of *The King*. Co-produced and distributed by the streaming behemoth, the 133-minute film draws on three plays from William Shakespeare's 'Henriad': *Henry IV, Parts 1 & 2* and *Henry V*.

At its centre lies Prince Hal, later Henry V, played by Timothée Chalamet (pictured below), who earned an Oscar nomination for his turn in coming-of-age drama *Call Me by Your Name*. Joel Edgerton plays Falstaff, while Robert Pattinson of the *Twilight* series brings a dastardly swagger to his turn as the Dauphin.

Reports from Venice, where *The King* received its premiere, suggest a script (written by Edgerton and director David Michôd) that takes some liberties with the Bard's words. Falstaff, for instance, far from being the cowardly figure familiar to audiences, is shown as a grizzled and even distinguished military veteran. As for the overall tone of the film, expect grittiness. **H**

The King

Scheduled to screen at BFI London Film Festival on 3 October, bfi.org.uk/lff. Streaming on Netflix from November



Netflix's Shakespeare epic *The King* sees rising star Timothée Chalamet take centre stage as Prince Hal

EXPLORE... LAVENHAM, SUFFOLK

A wealth of history

Built on the fortunes of England's mercantile elite, the Suffolk village of Lavenham is home to an abundance of architectural treasures.

JULIAN HUMPHRYS journeys to the heart of the East Anglian countryside to learn more about this rural idyll

Today Lavenham seems like a typical Suffolk rural village. Five hundred years ago, however, it was anything but typical. At that time, it was one of England's foremost industrial centres, famous for the production of high-quality broad-cloth. Indeed, in 1524 Lavenham was the 14th richest town in the kingdom, paying more tax than cities like Lincoln or York.

The late 15th and early 16th centuries saw a building boom in Lavenham as its rich clothiers, the multi-millionaire businessmen of their day, spent a fortune on lavish timber-framed houses in which to live and halls in which their guilds could meet. But, based as it was on one single industry, Lavenham's wealth rested on fragile foundations.

When in the 1530s the cloth industry was hit by a recession, Lavenham had no alternative economic activity to fall back on. Within a generation the town had declined from thriving as a hub of industry to stagnating as an economic backwater. This is the reason why so many wonderful medieval timber-framed buildings still survive in Lavenham today – nobody had the money to replace them with anything else.

Painting wooden beams to create a black and white pattern on such buildings was never a local tradition in Lavenham. At Lavenham beams were either left to season to a silvery grey colour, given a coat of limewash to weatherproof them and deter insects, or plastered over completely.

Many of Lavenham's walls are painted white but a substantial number are brightly coloured, with russets, pinks and ochres

being popular choices. Plasterwork is often decorated by pargetting – patterns or images scratched or moulded while the plaster was still wet. Many buildings are jettied, with upper storeys jutting out above the storeys below them. Some say this was to increase the space in a building without obstructing the street below while others argue it was primarily done for aesthetic reasons and point out that jettied buildings were rare on the backs of buildings where it couldn't be seen by passers-by.

Lavenham's Guildhall of Corpus Christi is one of England's finest timber-framed buildings. Cared for by the National Trust, it occupies a prime position in the market square and the exuberant carving of its exterior woodwork is something to be marvelled at. As Lavenham's fortunes declined it was pressed into a variety of uses – prison, workhouse, almshouse, restaurant and nursery school. The last of these seems rather fitting, for it was while she was staying around the corner in Shilling Street that 23-year old poet Jane Taylor penned the words to one of our best-loved nursery rhymes – 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star'.

Lavenham may be famous for its timber-framed buildings but it's dominated by its huge stone church with its 140-foot tower. Largely rebuilt during the town's early Tudor heyday, it's an expression of the piety, power and wealth of its patrons, notably John de Vere, 13th earl of Oxford – a key figure in Henry Tudor's victory at Bosworth – and Thomas Spring, one of England's richest entrepreneurs. Just in case there was any doubt over who stumped up the cash, the church's exterior is bedecked with the boar and star badges of de Vere and the arms and mark of his merchant collaborator. **H**

Julian Humphrys is a historian and author specialising in battlefields. His books include *Enemies at the Gates* (English Heritage, 2007)

VISIT For more information, head over to: visit-lavenham.co.uk

Golden age
Lavenham's High Street reflects the village's heyday

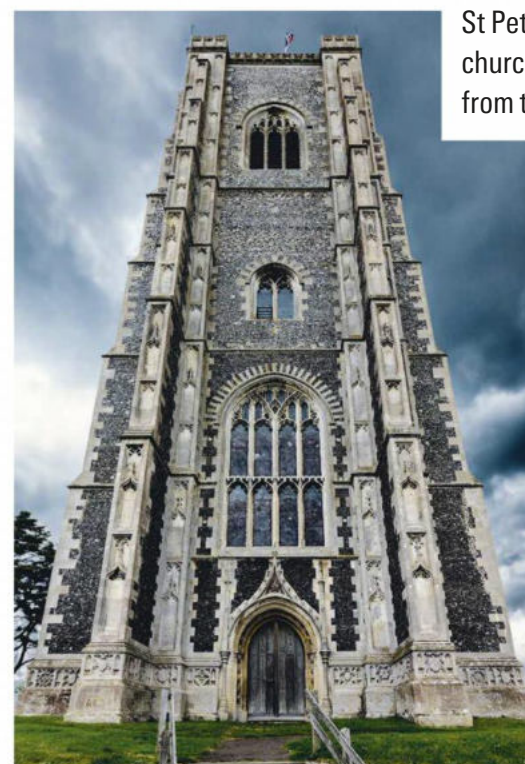


AWL IMAGES/ROBERT HARDING/BRIDGEMAN ARCHIVES/ALAMY

// It was in Shilling Street that the 23-year-old poet Jane Taylor penned the words to 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star' //



LEFT: Lavenham Guildhall, now owned by the National Trust
CENTRE: The wool trade generated great wealth; in 1524 Lavenham was the 14th richest town in the country



St Peter and St Paul's 'wool church', financed by profits from the local wool trade

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For more content on the Tudor era, go to historyextra.com/period/tudors

HALF TERM *Heritage*

HAMPSHIRE



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02392 284372 // museum@rhqrmpp.org

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01420 511275 // gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk

SUFFOLK



Felixstowe Museum

Housed in the last remaining Submarine Mining Establishment building in the UK, the museum brings to life the local social and military history of the area. Fourteen display areas are devoted to different themes. Special activities for children; tearoom and gift shop on site. Well-behaved dogs welcome!

01394 674355 // felixstowemuseum.org

OXFORDSHIRE



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01235 817200 // didcotrailwaycentre.org.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



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01908 676 900 // mkgallery.org

PEMBROKESHIRE



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01437 751326 // pictoncastle.co.uk

With half term round the corner, now is the best time to plan an adventure with all the historians in your life.

CARMARTHENSHIRE



National Wool Museum

Housed in a former woollen mill, in the beautiful Teifi Valley, this gem of a museum follows the story of wool, from fleece to fabric. Take a self-guided trail, try your hand at traditional techniques of carding and spinning, and learn about the once mighty industry that produced woollen goods for sale around the world. Free entry.

museum.wales/wool // 02920 573070 // wool@museumwales.ac.uk

SWANSEA



National Waterfront Museum

Right on the dock in Swansea's marina, the National Waterfront Museum tells the human story of 300 years of Welsh industry and innovation, looking at the impact the Industrial Revolution had on the people and places of Wales. Through 15 themed galleries, you can find out how Wales was once at the forefront of technology. Free entry.

museum.wales/Swansea // waterfront@museumwales.ac.uk

BEDFORDSHIRE

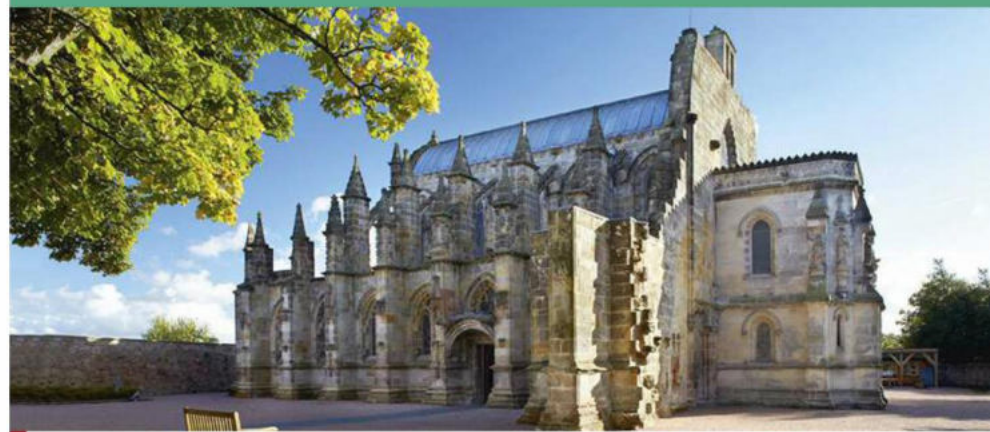


The Higgins Bedford

Explore Dreams and Nightmares exhibition and enjoy spooky and creative half term workshops for children aged 4 to 11. At The Higgins Bedford, there's fun for all the family to enjoy this Halloween with mini monsters, clay models and bubbling potions! £3 per child, free for accompanying adults (dates and times vary). Visit our website for more details.

01234 718618 // thehigginsbedford.org.uk

SCOTLAND



Rosslyn Chapel

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0131 440 2159 // rosslynchapel.com

SCOTLAND



The Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum

Nestling beneath Stirling Castle, in the King's Park, the ancient hunting grounds of the Stuart monarchs, is the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum. We host a wide variety of different exhibitions every year, showcasing many different disciplines including fine art, social history, cultural history and other subjects of local and national interest.

01786 471917 // smithartgalleryandmuseum.co.uk

OVERSEAS, GREECE

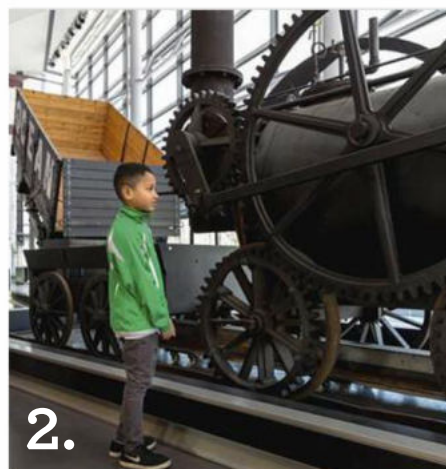


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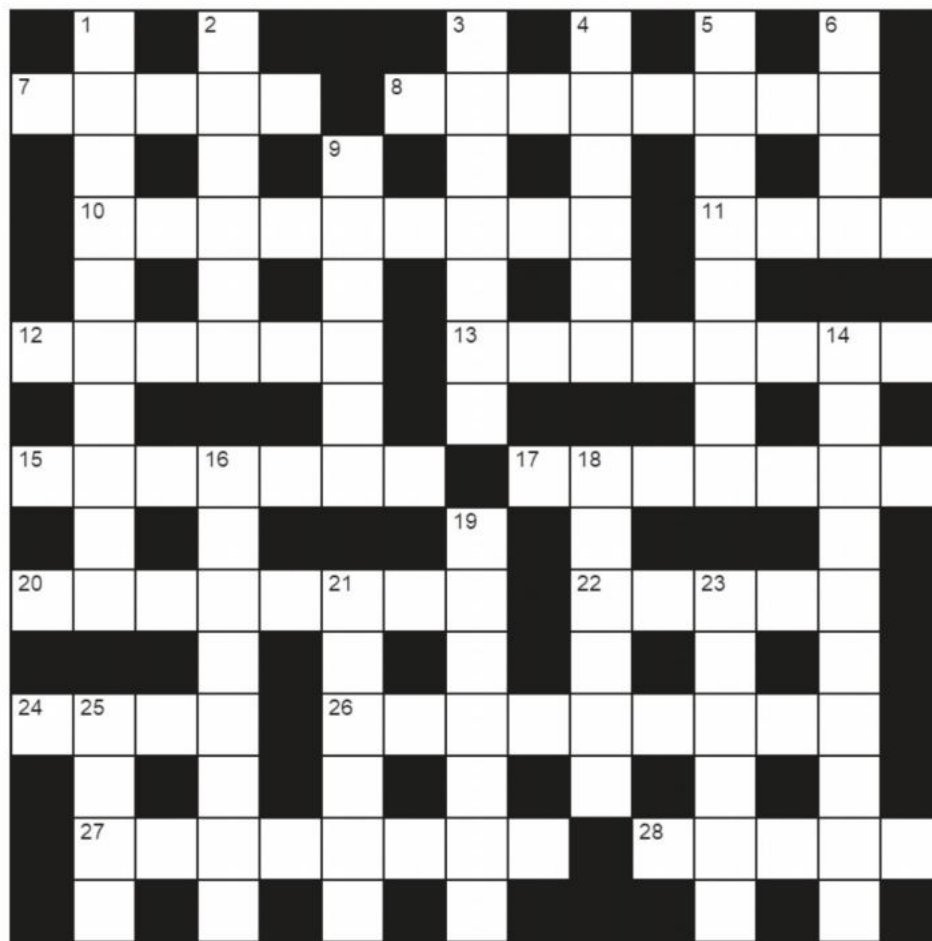
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PRIZE CROSSWORD

Across

- 7** The very first Scout camp was held in 1907 on an island in this town's harbour (5)
8 Picasso masterpiece, a homage to the Basque town notoriously bombed in 1937 (8)
10/25 Imperial palace complex commissioned by the third emperor of the Ming dynasty (9,4)
11 See 26 across
12 The lur (or lure) was a historic horn or trumpet of Greece and northern Europe made from this metal alloy (6)
13 A 20th-century US president, renowned for being 'tight-lipped' in private (8)
15 Cretan capital of the legendary King Minos (7)
17 The ____-Ribbentrop Pact (1939) was a non-aggression agreement between Germany and the USSR (7)
20 Apache leader who, in the late 1800s, led his people against the military might of the United States (8)
22 One of the kings of this country was Joseph Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon (5)
24 This unit of land measurement takes its name from the Old English for 'field' (4)
26/11/1 This 1944 meeting of major powers at a Washington DC mansion was the basis for the United Nations (9,4,10)
27 British PM with the longest continuous tenure since the early 19th century (8)
28 One of the three ships used in Christopher Columbus's first voyage in 1492/93 (5)



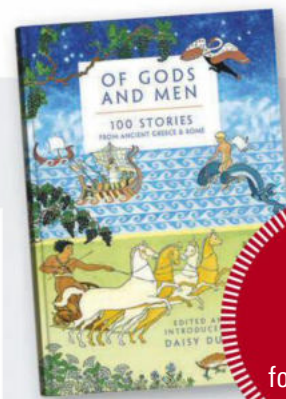
- attempt by the British government to cultivate areas of Tanganyika (now Tanzania) after the Second World War (10)
16 One of the finest examples of an English medieval fortified manor house, ____ Castle, in Shropshire (8)
18 Irish warrior whose poems were 'discovered' in the 1760s by James Macpherson, who was later believed to be their true author (6)
19 Nickname for British soldiers, particularly during the First World War (7)
21 A title assumed by 20th-century Europe's first fascist dictator (2,4)
23 Historic region of France, encompassing most of the Pas-de-Calais département (6)
25 See 10 across

Compiled by **Eddie James**

Down

- 1** See 26 across
2 Old British coin worth a tenth of a pound (6)
3 Australian-born newspaper publisher and media entrepreneur who became a naturalised US citizen in 1985 (7)
4 Twentieth-century European head of state whose dictatorship lasted for 36 years (6)
5 Emperor during whose reign Japan formally became a constitutional monarchy (8)
6 Torture device introduced into the Tower of London in the 15th century and nicknamed the 'Duke of Exeter's Daughter' (4)
9 Roman scholar, lawyer, statesman and great orator – a champion of republican principles who lived at the same time as Julius Caesar (6)
14 The ____ Scheme was an unsuccessful

Who is this Apache leader who took on the US military?
 (see 20 across)



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Solution to our September 2019 Crossword

Across: 1 Longbow 5 Cawdor 9/12 The Dole 11 Gallic Wars 13 Vance 15 Oxford 18 Mixtec 19 Radio 21/10 Lord Melbourne 23 Occupation 25 Star shell 26 Axe 27 Wyvern 28 Barrosa
Down: 2 Outram 3 Glenlivet 4 Olmec 5 Crossword 6 World 7 Overlord 8 Sloane 14 Nicholson 16 Frost fair 17 Sikorsky 19 Rocket 20 Powers 22 Drake 24 Pella
Eight winners of A Short History of Medicine
 John Foster, Wigan; Michael Boyle, Northants; Andrew Wilson, Hyde; David Jandrell, Newport; KC Foulkes, Wigan; Stella Bond, Winchester; M Tucker, Winchester; Tom Carroll, Nottingham

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 (see 16 down)



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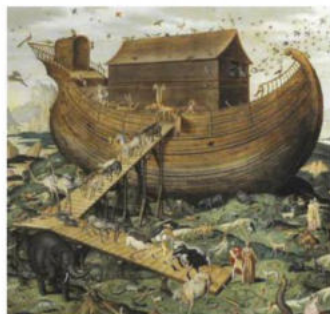
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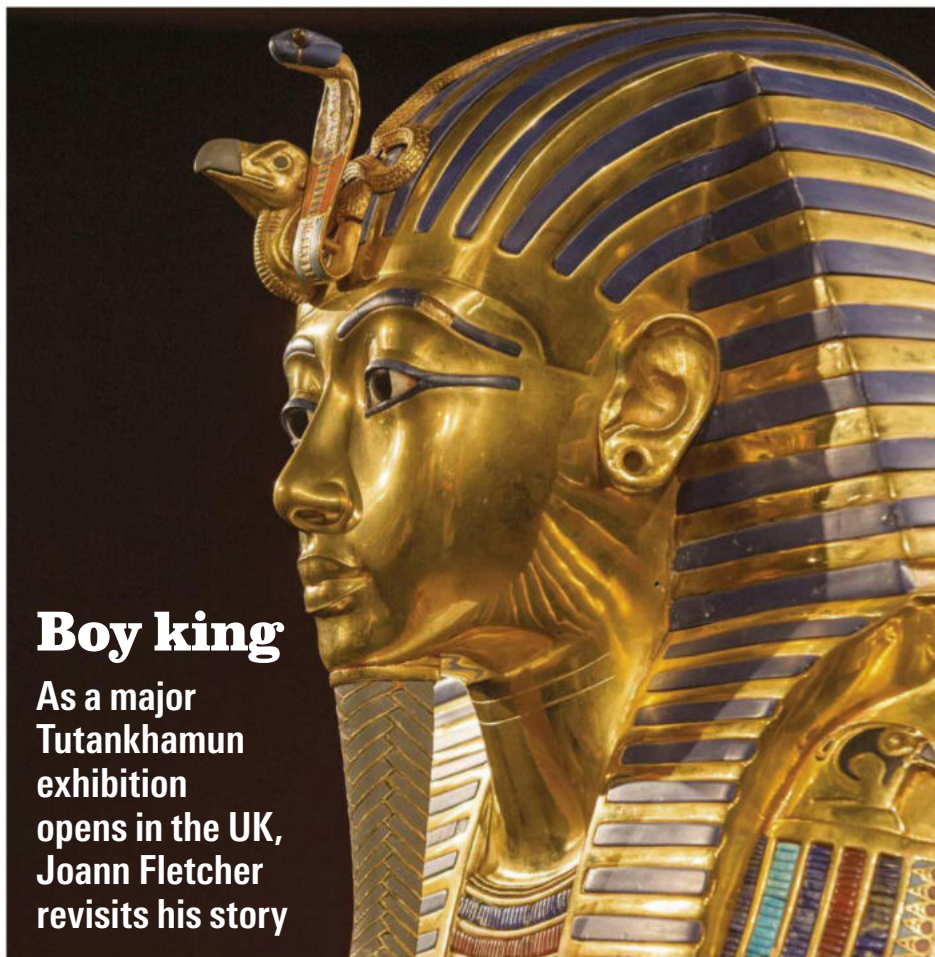


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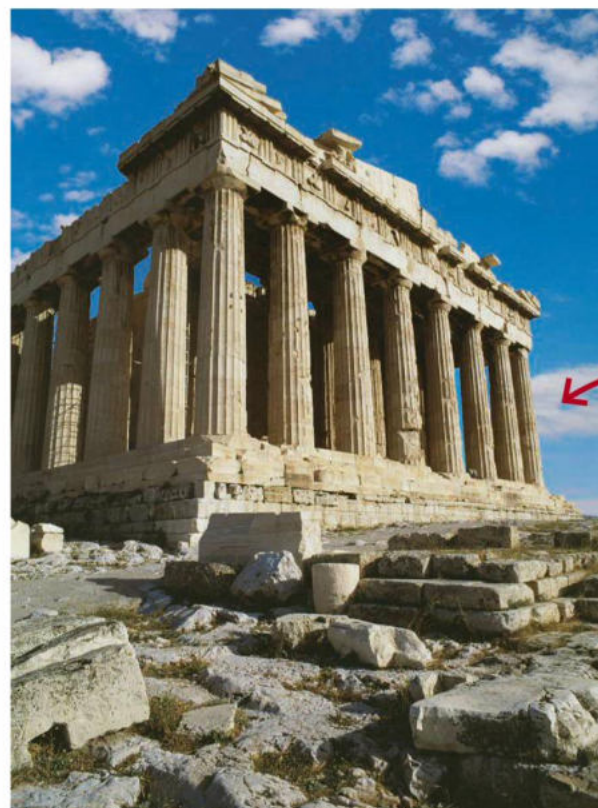


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MY HISTORY HERO

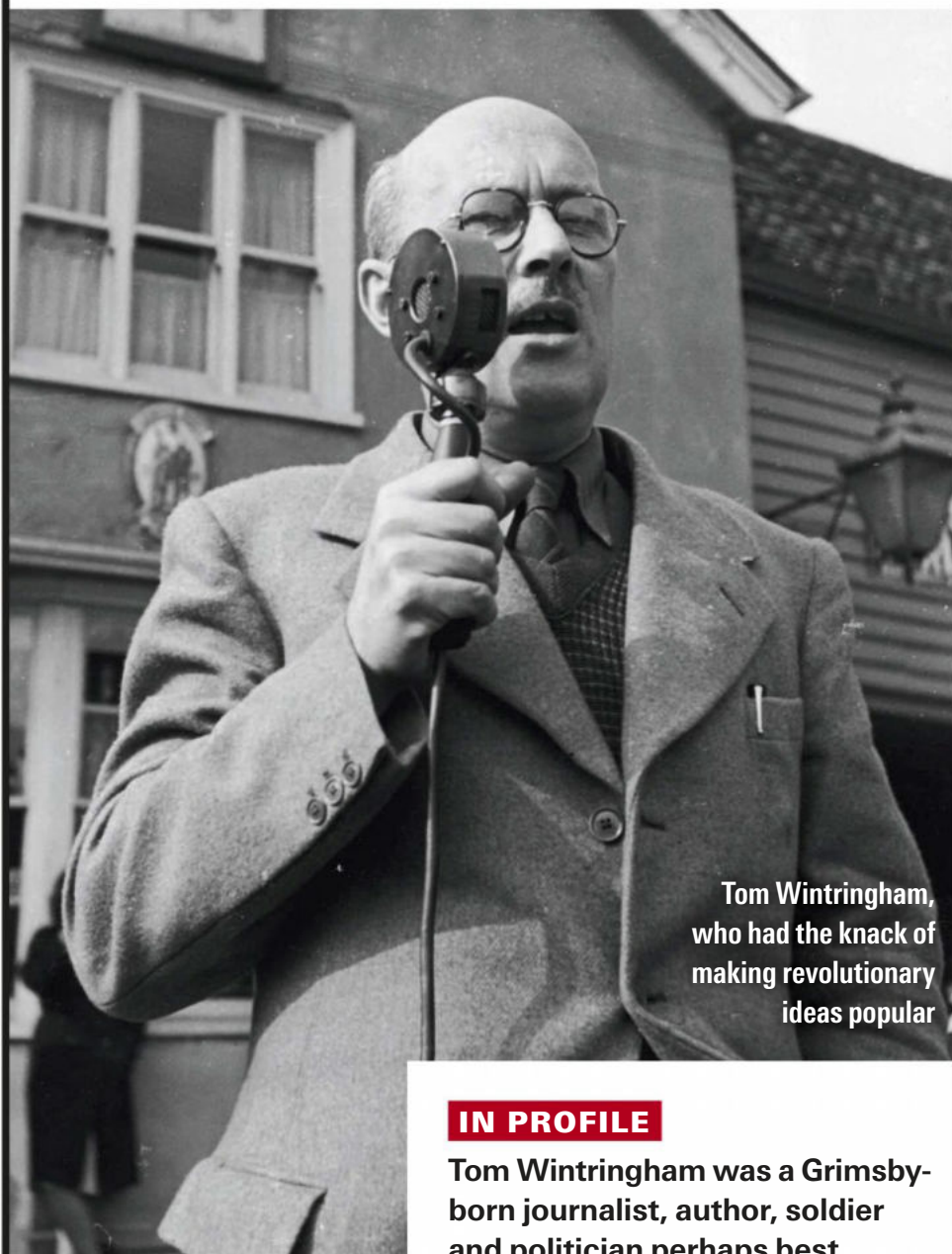
Human rights activist *Peter Tatchell* chooses

Tom Wintringham

1898–1949



Peter Tatchell is a human rights campaigner best known for his work with the LGBT movement



Tom Wintringham, who had the knack of making revolutionary ideas popular

IN PROFILE

Tom Wintringham was a Grimsby-born journalist, author, soldier and politician perhaps best known for the role he played in the formation of the Home Guard in the Second World War. A one-time communist, he commanded the British Battalion in the Spanish Civil War. He was also a founding member of the wartime socialist Common Wealth Party. He died of a heart attack aged 51.

// He called for the creation of a people's army and in *Picture Post* he instructed readers how to make Molotov cocktails //

When did you first hear about Wintringham? While reading Angus Calder's *The People's War* in 1974, an account of Britain's fight against Nazism.

What kind of man was he? Steeped in the values of English radicalism, from the Levellers to the Chartists, Wintringham was a fine speaker and writer. A First World War veteran, he wanted a land fit for heroes. He became a member of the newly formed Communist Party of Great Britain in 1923 and worked for its paper, *Workers' Weekly*.

What made him a trailblazer? He was a pioneering leftwinger who became a household name and had the knack of making revolutionary ideas popular. He also understood that for the left to win, it needed to make broad alliances.

And his finest hour? In 1940, when invasion threatened, he called for the creation of a people's army and in *Picture Post* he instructed readers how to make Molotov cocktails. He so enthused the public that the government created what became the Home Guard, a watered-down version of his ideas, but still radical. A far cry from the blimpish depictions of *Dad's Army*, it was a citizens' army predominantly of working-class people.

Is there anything that you don't particularly admire? He had brazen, hurtful affairs – personal betrayals not consistent with his otherwise high ethical standards.

Can you see any parallels between his life and yours? Tom was independent-minded and not afraid to dissent from the consensus – he was cast out by the communist movement. I suffered a similar fate when I challenged leftwing homophobia in the early 1970s and, more recently, when I fell out with sections of the left over my campaigns against Islamist extremism and in support of democracy movements in countries such as Russia, Syria and Zimbabwe.

What direction did he take after quitting the Communist Party? He was a leading figure in the Common Wealth Party, which espoused one of the most leftwing manifestos ever: common ownership, industrial democracy, regional parliaments and proportional representation. It won three wartime byelections, and paved the way for Labour's socialist vision and victory in 1945.

If you could meet him, what would you ask him? You sacrificed much of your life to the communist movement: how did you cope when its leaders denounced you politically and demanded that you give up Kitty Bowler, your future wife, on the erroneous grounds that she was a 'Trotskyite spy'? **H**
Peter Tatchell was talking to York Membery

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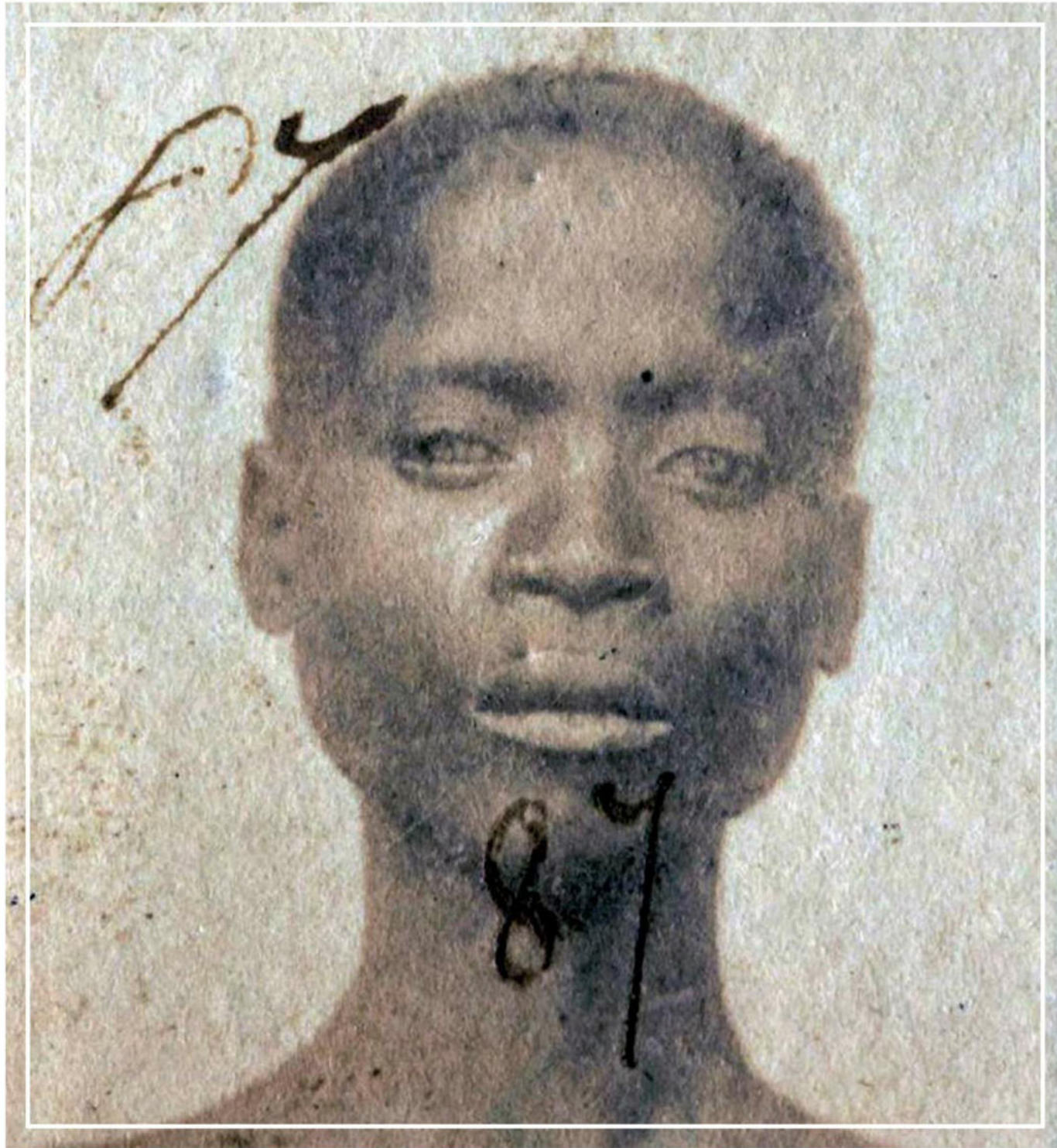
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An African man after being liberated from a slave ship by the Royal Navy, 1871. In all, more than 12 million captives were loaded onto Atlantic slavers' vessels

A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE SLAVE TRADE

By Professor James Walvin

INTRODUCTION

The British banned their slave trade in 1807, but it continues to exercise a repellent fascination in the public mind. The image of a foul slave ship, packed tight with African victims, is etched in popular memory on both sides of the Atlantic. This is a historical horror story that gets worse the more we know about it. Despite some remarkable research, it remains difficult to write a historical account that does full justice to the victims, or fully comprehends the outlook of the tens of thousands of people involved in the trade.

Even with indisputable data, it is still hard to grasp the scale of the Atlantic trade. Over centuries it devoured millions of human beings, blighted regions of Africa and obliged its victims to endure a protracted and scarcely imaginable seaborne trauma. The 11 million (and more) Africans who stumbled ashore, at myriad points along a vast coastline stretching from New Amsterdam to the River Plate, became the shock troops in the conquest of the virgin Americas. Until the 1820s, the number of African arrivals greatly outnumbered European arrivals. The African survivors from the slave ships (and their local-born offspring) laid the foundations for the emergence of early material prosperity in the Americas. Slave-based plantations spawned a new form of wealth – and not merely for planters, but for their backers, suppliers and consumers in Europe and the Americas. Their efforts can still be seen in surviving plantations and their great houses, but equally on the streets of Liverpool and Bordeaux, Nantes and Rio. More chillingly, of course, their story echoes through the gloomy cells of the massive forts on Africa's slaving coast. Here is a story that draws together four continents. The sinews that bound them ever closer were the enslaved Africans.

The slave trade has often been projected as a distant story: a historical account that concerned Africa, the Americas and the sea routes in between. Viewed from Europe, it was as if the slave trade was far away: something that took place over the horizon. Yet Europe was the engine behind the whole enterprise, in inspiration, in finance and support, in political and military engagement – and in profitable returns. Yet, although the slave trade hugely benefited European finance, industry and employment, it was largely regarded as existing on the margins of European experience. It was, to put it crudely, out of sight and out of mind.

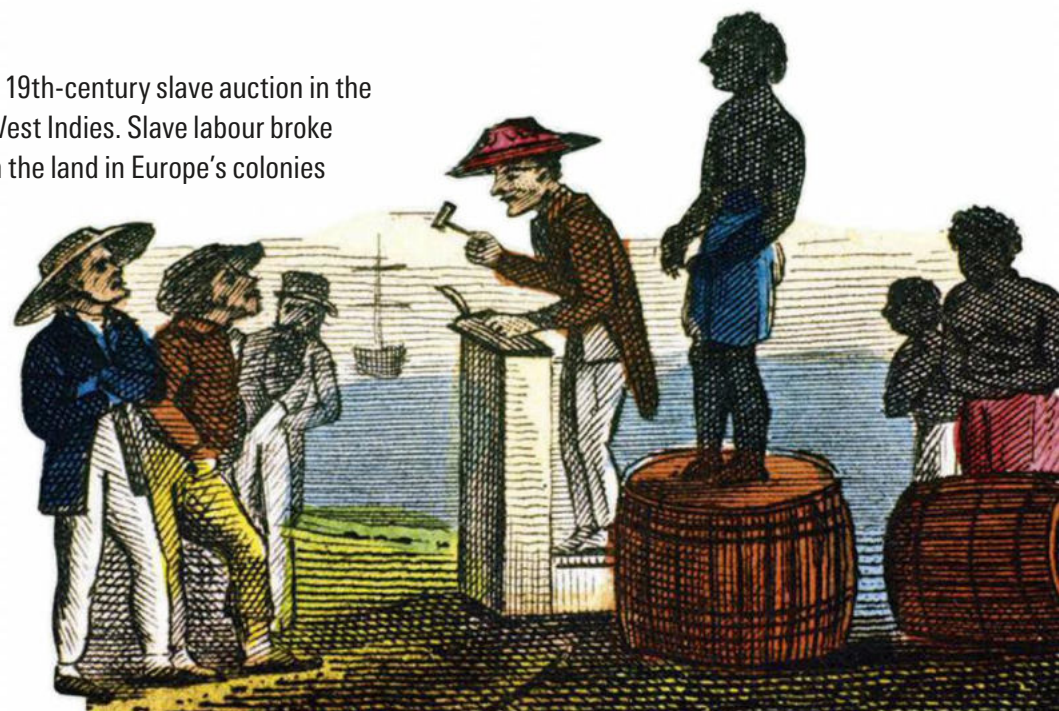
Yet it was the slave ships that made possible the initial development of swathes of tropical and semi-tropical America. Their human cargoes broke in the land, cutting back and burning the luxuriant wilderness and converting it to profitable cultivation. The relatively small handfuls of European settlers, and the reluctant (and rapidly diminishing) native American peoples were inadequate for the labour involved. Thus the Atlantic slave routes became the major

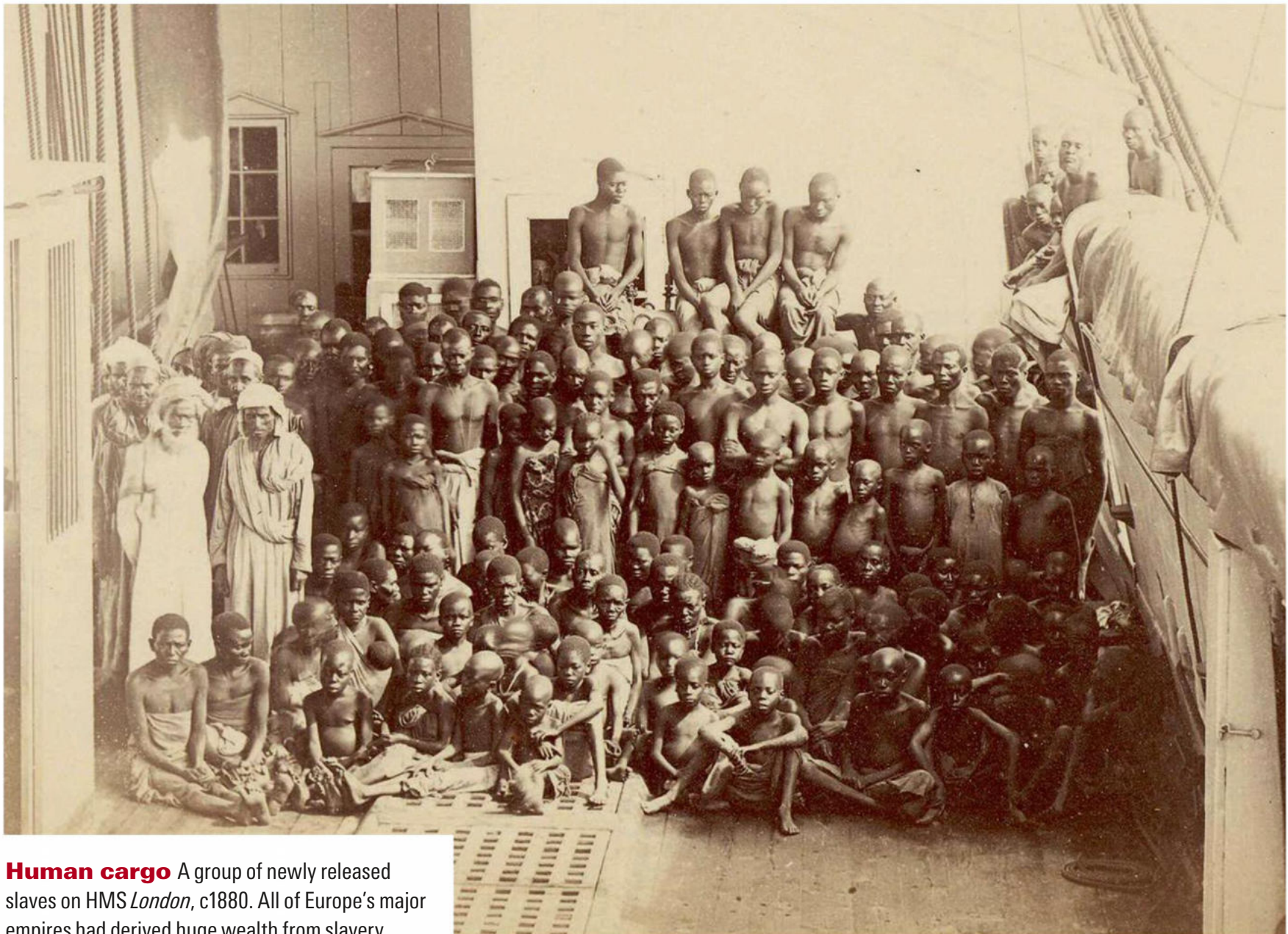
supply of labour for the development of the Americas. Enslaved Africans laid the foundations on which subsequent massive human and economic growth took place. We need, then, to integrate the story of the Atlantic slave ships into the wider history of the Americas, and to see them as a critical force in American development.

The slave plantations are generally seen as the crucible from which black society evolved, in a variety of different forms, across the Americas. Yet the slave ships themselves played their own distinctive role. The traumas of the months anchored off the African coast, followed by months at sea, left their own physical and mental scars on the survivors. It was an experience that fed into family and community life across the Americas. The Atlantic crossing was an exposure to a violent culture of management and control that had developed in the Americas. Slaves knew what to expect if they stepped out of line.

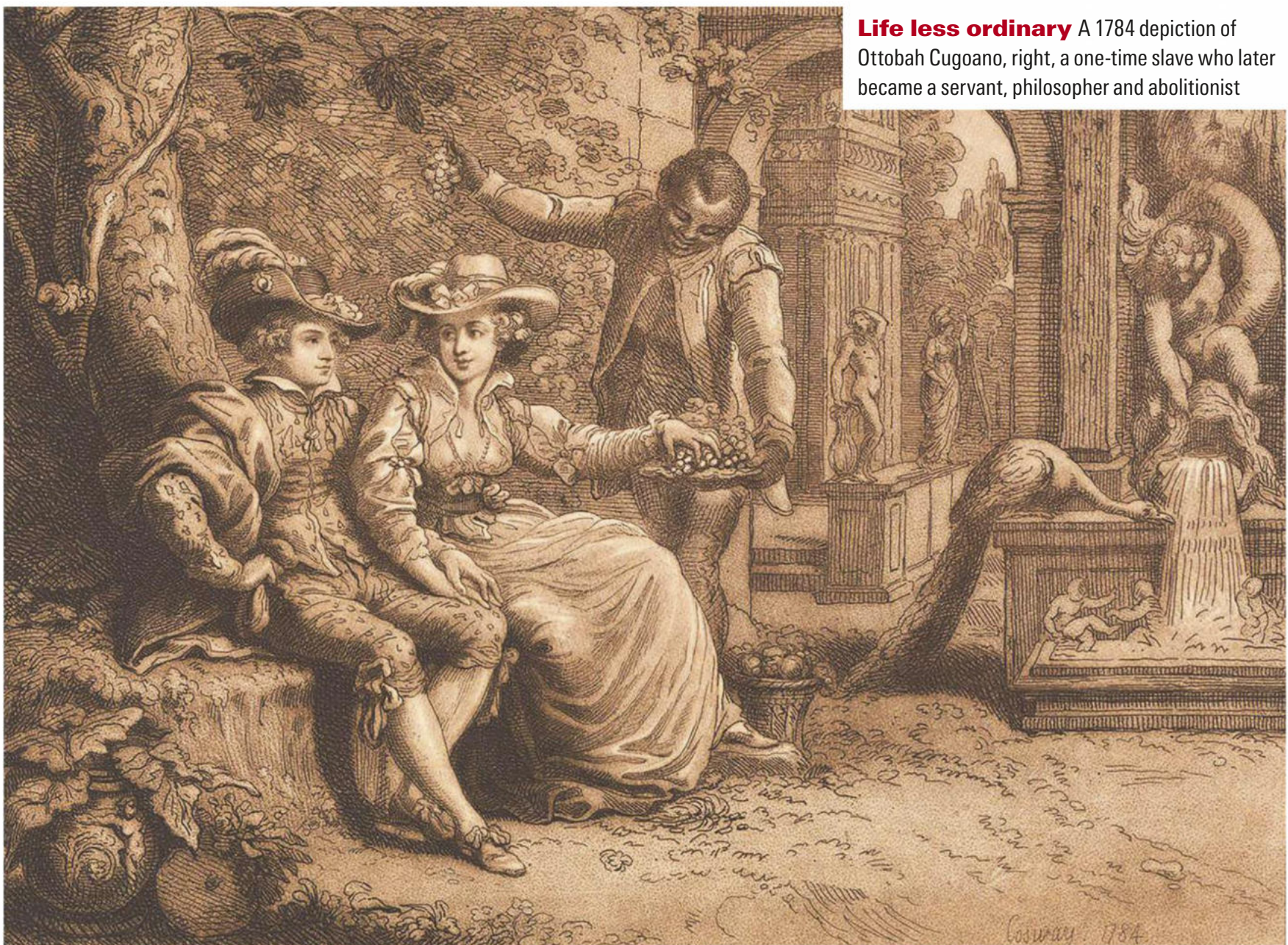
Does all this matter – except to historians? Undoubtedly. There are millions of descendants of the slave system on both sides of the Atlantic for whom this story has a painful resonance. But we need to grasp that its importance extends far beyond those with a personal stake. It matters because it is part of the history of Europe itself. All of Europe's major empires – Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, British and French – derived enormous benefits from Atlantic slavery. Their slave ships were loaded in, and then cast off, from all of Europe's major ports. The slave trade was an important feature of the European historical experience, and we need to find some way of integrating it more securely into that narrative, and of creating public awareness that slaving helped to shape the kind of people we were – and became. **H**

A 19th-century slave auction in the West Indies. Slave labour broke in the land in Europe's colonies

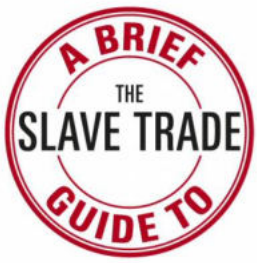




Human cargo A group of newly released slaves on HMS *London*, c1880. All of Europe's major empires had derived huge wealth from slavery



Life less ordinary A 1784 depiction of Ottobah Cugoana, right, a one-time slave who later became a servant, philosopher and abolitionist



THE STORY OF THE SLAVE TRADE

Many civilisations using slave labour, from ancient to modern times, have relied on supplies of slaves from distant places, but the Atlantic slave trade was unique: in size, geographic reach and global significance. From the first recognised slave ship departing Africa for the Americas in 1525, to the last (to Cuba in 1866) more than 12 million Africans in total were loaded on to the Atlantic slave ships. The 11 million-plus survivors were scattered across the Americas, though most, initially, were destined for the tropical and semi-tropical economies of Europe's colonial powers. Enslaved Africans toiled in every major industry: extracting precious metals and timber; growing and harvesting coffee; building railways; and cultivating tobacco, rice and – most critically – sugar. There was never enough labour for these industries among the Europeans or Amerindian people, and enslaved Africans filled the void. Before 1820, many more Africans than Europeans landed in the Americas. In key areas of the Americas, the African was the critical pioneer, laying the basis for a thriving New World which was later to lure millions of migrants from Europe.

On their tentative explorations of the African coast in the 15th century, Europe's emergent maritime powers, led by the Portuguese, found sources of gold and of slave labour, both bought and exchanged from African traders. Their initial trade in slaves developed between different African societies. But a hostile environment, and especially disease, prevented Europeans (with a few notable exceptions) establishing settlements in Africa. Meanwhile, in Europe's American settlements, they needed labour, particularly following the massive decline of Indian populations (due, again, to disease). Europe's maritime technology and the availability of slave labour in Africa came together into a profitable trade, with slaves transported in growing numbers across the Atlantic. The slave ships concentrated on African societies familiar with slavery (in the form of women, prisoners of war or criminals) and which, to satisfy the demand from the slave ships, could extend their search for victims further into the interior. The flow of Africans to the coast was thus as much a consequence of internal – and often violent – African factors as it was of demand from the American plantations. But the stimulus of the presence of the slave ships became vital.

This trade began *before* Columbus crossed the Atlantic, with enslaved Africans shipped between African coastal societies, to the Atlantic islands and on to Europe (notably to Portugal). The early transatlantic voyages, with slaves collected mainly via piratical raids, went to Spain's Caribbean colonies, where the captives were largely used for gold-mining. All of this changed when the Portuguese developed

slave-based sugar plantations. After perfecting it on the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe in the Gulf of Guinea, the Portuguese shifted sugar cultivation – along with African slaves – to Brazil by the late 16th century. It prompted the growth of European demand for sweet food and drink.

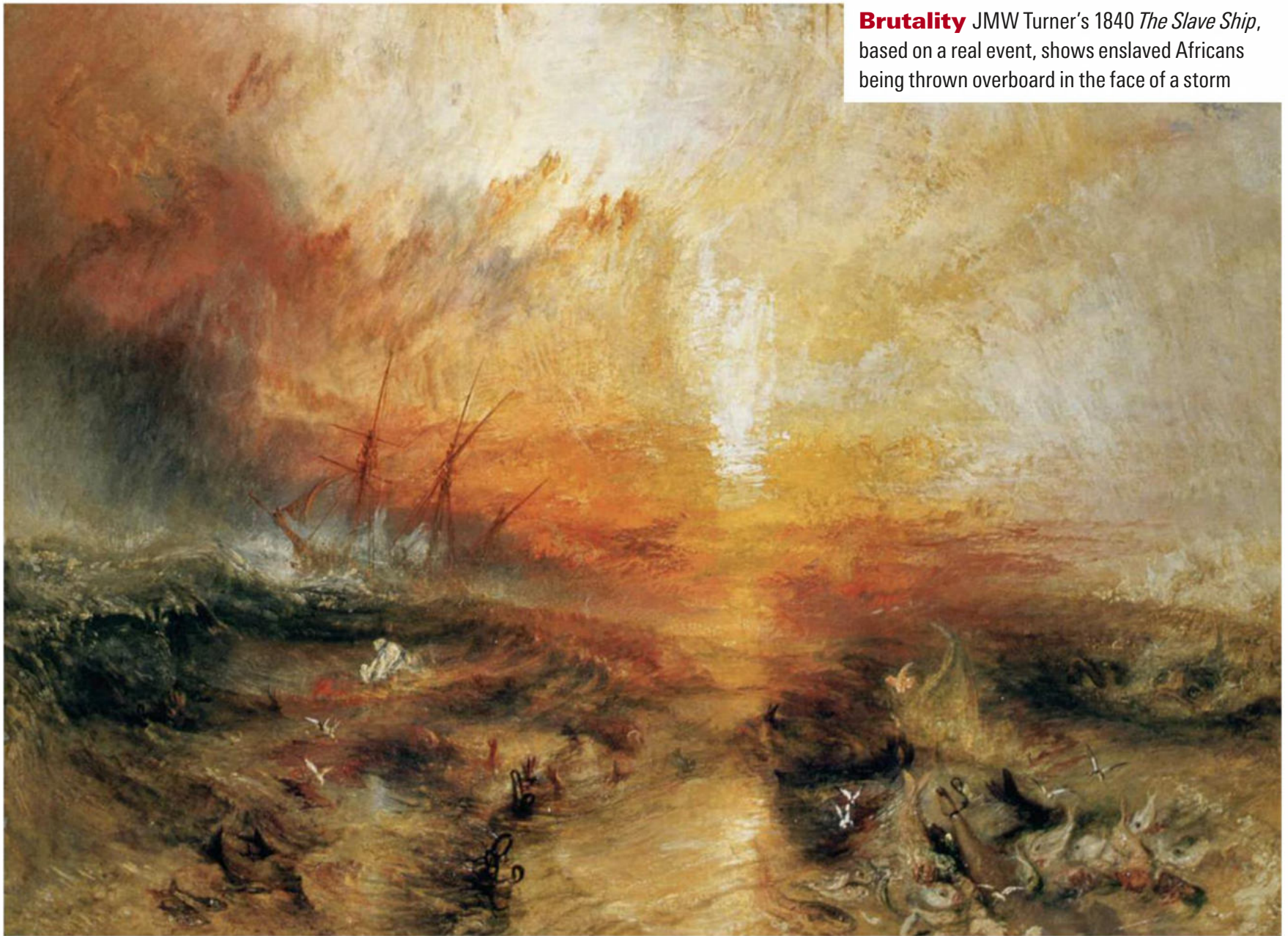
The early piratical trade for slaves evolved into a formal, regulated business, with slave ships carrying valuable cargoes to Africa to exchange for slaves. Commodities from different parts of the world were exchanged for enslaved people. They, in turn, were shipped across the Atlantic. Slave-ship captains were important players: master-mariners and managers of generally difficult crews, they were key traders on the African coast. They offered a huge range of goods to tempt African traders to part with their slaves: textiles, guns, French wines and Caribbean rum, cowrie shells and tobacco. Thereafter, they became the head jailors on floating prisons packed with dangerous and defiant Africans.

Huge numbers of Africans began to land, first in Brazil and then in the French and British islands in the Caribbean, and in much smaller numbers in North America. By the end of the 17th century, up to 30,000 Africans were being transported annually. A century later, those numbers had almost tripled. Between 1642 and 1800, Dutch, British and French slave ships had carried more than 5 million Africans to the New World. Another 2 million followed in the half century to 1850.

The Atlantic slave trade became the largest enforced movement of humanity ever recorded. It attracted all the maritime nations of both Europe and the Americas. Ships headed to Africa from 188 ports, almost half of them in America. Few ports could resist the commercial lure of the slave trade, and some (such as Bristol and Bordeaux) rose to civic and commercial eminence as a result of it. But the trade was dominated by a small band of ports. Ships from Rio, Salvador and Liverpool each carried more than a million Africans; Havana ships carried 683,000. The slave ships and their cargoes were backed by local financial and commercial interests, and by funders from a wide hinterland.

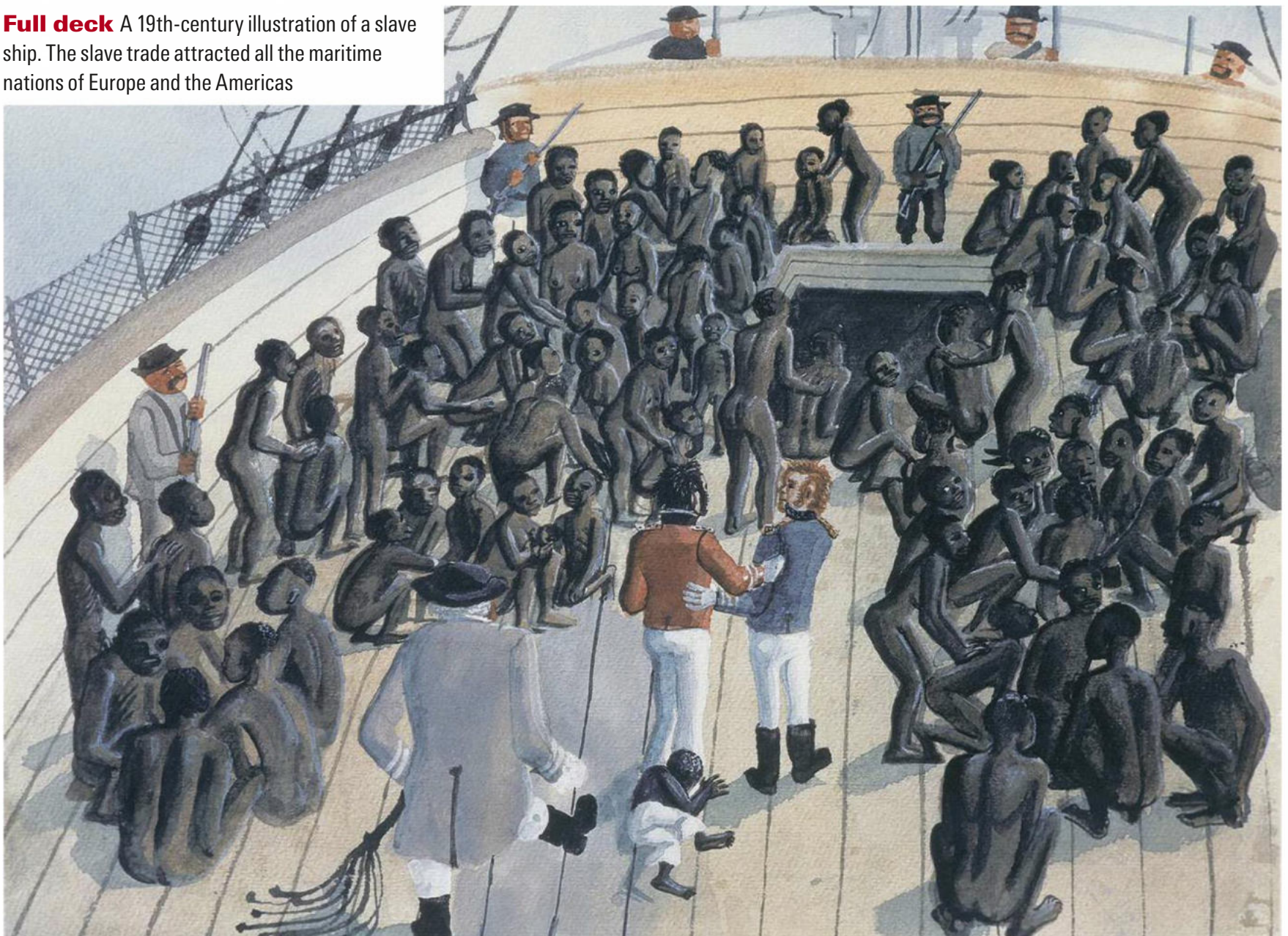
The labour of enslaved Africans drove the growth of economies across the Americas. Though based largely in tropical and semi-tropical work, slavery crept into all corners of the economies. Slaves worked as domestics, skilled workers, sailors and cowboys. Despite this, all of Europe's major slave empires, and the independent nations that emerged from the collapse of those empires, continued to view the slaves as 'chattel': objects of trade to be bought and sold, bartered and bequeathed, inherited and given away.

For some years, the slave trade was organised through national monopoly companies (designed to exclude other nations) but voracious American demand led to a more open trade. Slaving thus became an area of international

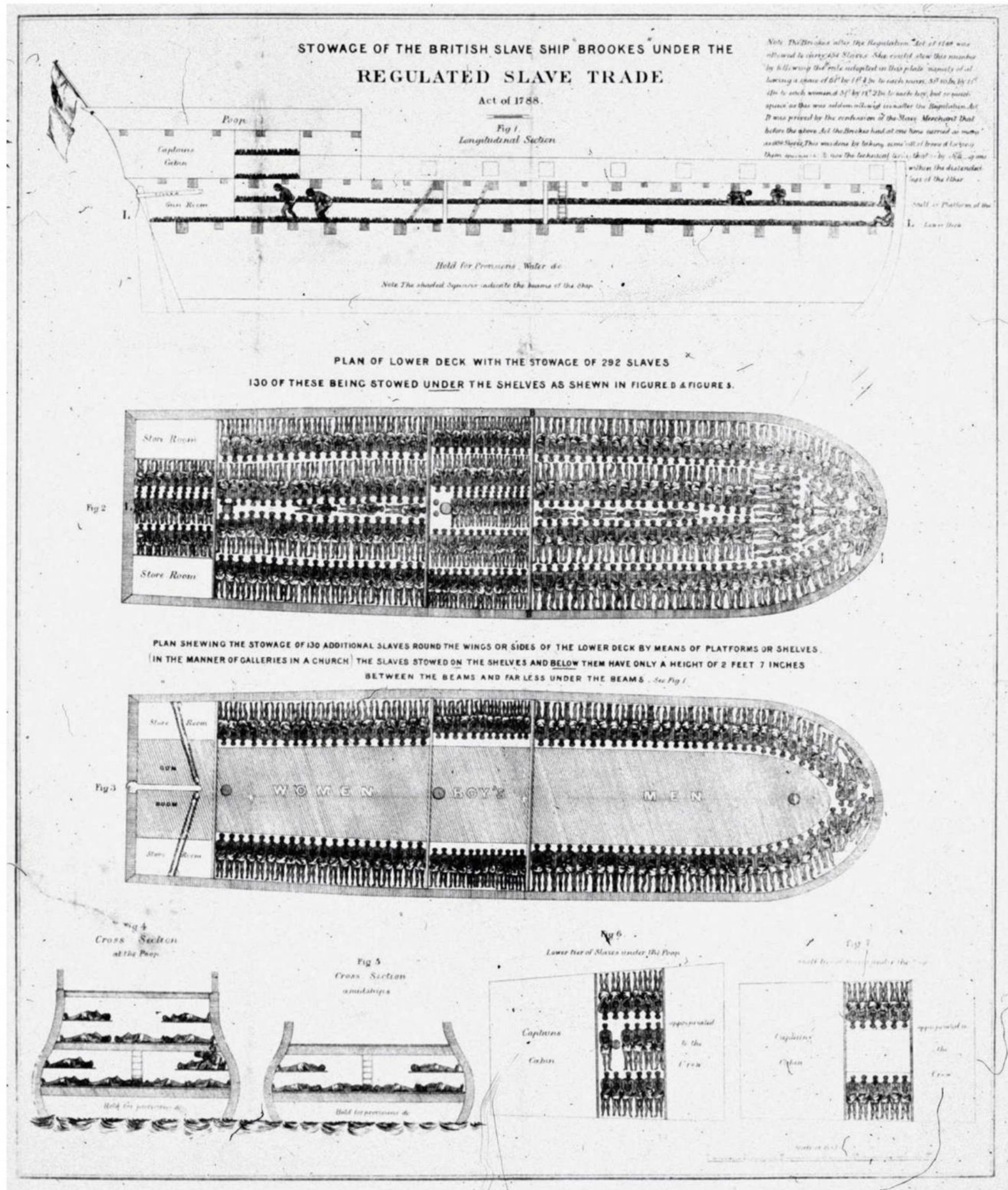


Brutality JMW Turner's 1840 *The Slave Ship*, based on a real event, shows enslaved Africans being thrown overboard in the face of a storm

Full deck A 19th-century illustration of a slave ship. The slave trade attracted all the maritime nations of Europe and the Americas



GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN



Horror conditions A drawing of the stowage on the slave ship *Brookes* – after the regulations introduced in Dolben's Act of 1788 – shows 292 slaves crammed onto the lower deck and 130 on shelves, each with a headroom of only 2ft 7 inches. These terrible images became a cause celebre for the abolition movement

competition, friction and colonial rivalries – whose effects can be witnessed in the shape of Africa’s massive coastal slave forts. Visited today by waves of tourists, these strongholds were once grim prisons for Africans about to be forced onto the ships. But many others embarked from different locations: from baracoons or simple beaches.

Although the Atlantic trade is seen in the popular mind as triangular, it was more complex and varied than that. Prevailing currents and winds created two trading systems. The one in the north Atlantic (dominated eventually by the British) was slower and therefore most costly of lives. The other, in the south Atlantic, provided faster transit times and was dominated by Portugal and Brazil. These two separate, though somewhat overlapping, systems ensured that Africans from particular regions were fed into the different American locations. As the slave trade evolved, however, routes developed between all points of the Atlantic compass, with vessels criss-crossing the Atlantic between Europe, Africa and the Americas. It became a vast market in African humanity, enabling American plantations to disgorge ever greater volumes of tropical produce for western consumers. In the process, commodities that were initially luxuries, such as sugar and tobacco, became the cheap everyday habits of people everywhere.

The damage to Africa was enormous, though unevenly spread. Slave trading waxed and waned over time and from one region to another; some areas remained relatively untouched by it. Enslaved people arrived on Africa’s Atlantic coast in response to upheavals and trade in the interior. By the late 18th century, slaves were being loaded at many points along the Atlantic coast, though the most active stretch of the trade was located between Cape Lopez (in modern Gabon) and Benguela (Angola). In the century to 1850, almost half of all Africans shipped to the Americas embarked from there. In fact, most Africans departed from a small number of ports: two-thirds from a mere 10 African locations. Almost 3 million left from Luanda in Angola, while more than 1 million went from Ouidah in modern Benin and 764,000 from Benguela.

They sailed westwards in a great variety of ships. We know of small vessels capable of carrying only a handful of slaves. At its peak however, the trade was characterised by large vessels ferrying upwards of 500 Africans. The *Brookes* (the most famous ship of all) – was 207 tons. On 10 voyages from Liverpool she transported 5,163 Africans (of whom 4,559 survived). Pictures of that ship – reprinted time and again today (see image, left) – have helped to secure the *Brookes* a place in popular memory.

From the early days, slave traders realised that overcrowding was dangerous, and slave trading nations tried to regulate it. Such regulations were often disregarded by avaricious traders – especially during the ‘illicit’ trade of the 19th century, when grossly overcrowded vessels, seeking a quick run to Brazil or Cuba to evade the US and British abolitionist navies, recorded some of the most appalling levels of death and suffering.

Africans entered the ship stripped of everything: their clothing, their names, their families and friends. They were totally deracinated and, not surprisingly, from first to last, the slave ships simmered with defiance. Many tried to escape en route to the coast, and resistance thrived on board the pestilential vessels. Vessels filled slowly with other captives, and many of them spent longer on the ship anchored off the African coast than they did on the Atlantic crossing.

Sailors had to be permanently alert: a careless move, slipshod handling of tools, inattention – all and more

could (and often did) lead to slave violence. One in 10 ships experienced some form of slave revolt, with Africans from certain regions more likely to revolt than others. Slave traders thus became cautious of where they traded and who they purchased. The crew always needed chains and shackles to secure their human cargoes, who greatly outnumbered them on all slave voyages.

The Atlantic crossing was a brutal experience for every African, and all learned the lesson of what would happen to those who openly resisted. The bitter memories of those seaborne sufferings were carried into the Americas. Yet despite the commonplace cruelty and widespread fatalities, the aim of the slave traders was to deliver slaves to American buyers. Traders did not seek to kill or harm the slaves, but rather to keep them alive and fit for sale at landfall. The fact that so many died, or arrived in a miserable condition, should not deceive us. The intention was to make a profit on the voyage – and that meant keeping slaves alive and well. However, often this was not possible, and shipboard conditions deteriorated. Bad weather, poor supplies, brutal sailors (with their own serious levels of mortality), disease – all these and more wreaked havoc among the incarcerated Africans. The suffering on the slave ships was uniquely horrible, and left its physical and mental scars on all who survived.

Although the average crossing took two months, voyages could be prolonged by bad weather, navigational errors and poor management. In time, experience, better ships and more efficient navigation hastened the voyages, but the Atlantic crossing still remained hazardous for all on board. However prolonged or swift, the middle passage entailed human misery on an incomprehensible scale, and its horrors proved influential in the rise of abolitionism. In the late 18th century, details from the slave ships, broadcast to an expanding reading public, appalled people on both sides of the Atlantic. It sparked the first phase of the campaign to end the trade.

In the last quarter of the 18th century, the slave trade found itself under growing attack. Yet this was a time when slave prices were high and when traders felt their business was lively and profitable. Early objections emerged from the French and Scottish Enlightenment, but perhaps even more influential was the rising influence of Dissenters – led by Quakers on both sides of the Atlantic. These early abolitionists, working through chapels and public meetings, exposed the brutal realities of the slave ships, helped by cheap print and popular literacy. The campaign was also aided by the voices of Africans – most of them ex-slaves – who lent a powerful



A neck shackle and chain from a slave ship, with an ankle shackle, top right



Apocalyptic violence An artist's depiction of the 1791 uprising in Saint-Domingue, showing slaves hanging French officers



Uprooted Plantation slaves outside their huts in Virginia. After 1800, the demands of the US cotton trade saw slaves being moved south and west

personal testimony to the cause, and were crucial in tipping the balance.

The ideals of liberation first unleashed by the American War of Independence (ironically led by a cabal of slave owners) were enhanced by the upheavals in France and her colonies after 1789. The question – obvious to slave and free alike – was: did the principle ‘liberty, equality, fraternity’ apply *only* to white people? After 1791, the apocalyptic violence in the French colony of Saint-Domingue (Haiti after 1804) sent tremors throughout the enslaved Americas. It inspired slaves and terrified slave owners. The Haitian revolution, and the protracted warfare between France and Britain, silenced the early demands for an end to the slave trade. A change of government and ministers, plus a re-emergence of anti-slave trade sentiment, revived the cause, and both Britain (1807) and the United States (1808) finally ended their slave trades; the Danes had been first in 1802. By then, the US no longer needed imported Africans because North America’s slave population was expanding and provided enough slaves for local use. But it was surprising that the British ended their trade when many involved – traders and planters – continued to demand ever more Africans. The British abolition seemingly flew in the face of the nation’s economic self-interest.

Thereafter, a series of treaties authorised the British and US navies to stop the slave ships, though huge numbers of Africans continued to cross the Atlantic, largely because of demand from Cuba and Brazil. Following the 1807–08 abolitions, some 2,000 vessels were stopped and 125,000 Africans released, but the trade was not seriously hindered until the 1840s and 1850s, when Cuba and Brazil finally acted

against it. Transported mainly in Spanish, Portuguese and Brazilian ships, more than 3 million enslaved Africans were landed in the Americas in the 19th century.

The Atlantic crossing remains perhaps the best-known passage for slaves, but there were other enormous slave routes that scattered Africans and their descendants across great distances. Over the course of a millennium, huge numbers of Africans were forcibly marched across the Sahara to the slave markets of north Africa. Other routes saw captives moved eastwards, to the slave markets of east Africa, and thence to Arabia and to India. Meanwhile, for those crossing the Atlantic, landfall did not bring an end to their enforced travels. After landing, they were moved onwards, to inland settlements and properties: to the North American backcountry, to remote plantations in Caribbean valleys and mountains, and deep into the vastness of South America – even high into the mining districts of the Andes.

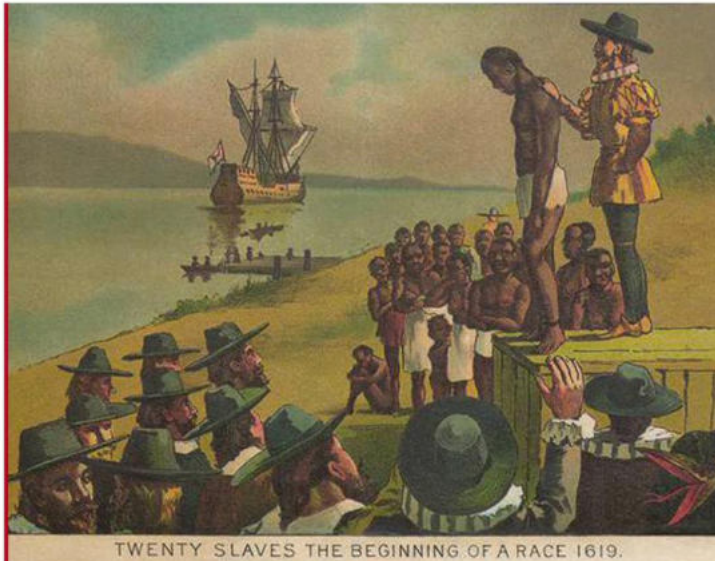
Slaves in the Americas could never feel secure, never certain that they would not be uprooted and moved on yet again: re-sold, bequeathed, inherited; relocated with the movement of owners, or through the misfortunes of economic upheaval or warfare. After 1800, the US cotton industry drew slave labour south and west from the old slave states. Almost a million people were uprooted in this way. One slave family in five was wrecked in the process, and one slave child in three was torn from its parents. At the same time, an internal slave trade in Brazil was even larger – forcibly moving people from old regions to newly opened industries (notably coffee). Long after the Atlantic slave trade had ceased, the buying and selling of human beings continued to blight the lives of millions. **H**

TIMELINE

How the trade unfolded

1525

The first slave ship departs Africa for the Americas, taking enslaved Africans to Spanish America.



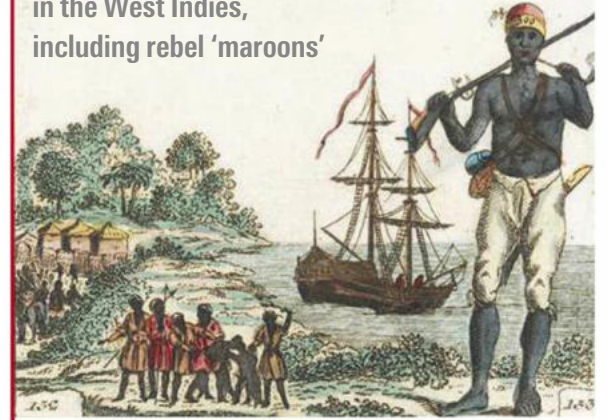
TWENTY SLAVES THE BEGINNING OF A RACE 1619.

1619

A group of 20 Africans land at Jamestown, Virginia – the first to arrive in Britain's North American colonies.



Vignettes of slavery in the West Indies, including rebel 'maroons'



1700s

Following the end of monopoly companies, huge numbers of Africans are transported to the Americas: 955,000 to Jamaica; 5,613,420 to Brazil.

1562–63

Sir John Hawkins leads the first English slave voyage, from Sierra Leone to Hispaniola.



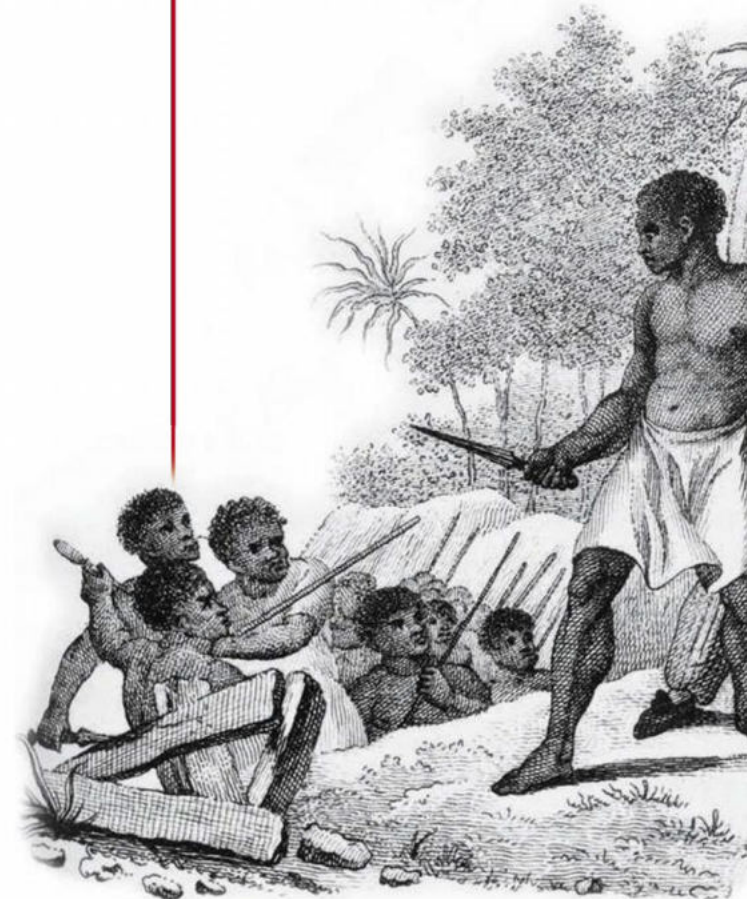
Sir John Hawkins:
naval commander,
privateer – and
slave trader

1672

The monopoly Royal African Company is founded. It supplies slaves to English colonies.

1789

The French Revolution prompts upheaval in French slave colonies. The slave rebellion in Saint-Domingue (1791) and warfare lead to an independent Haiti (1804).





1787-1808

British abolition quickly gains mass popular support, but its progress is stalled by the Haitian revolution. Following Danish abolition in 1802 and changed British political circumstances, Britain ends its slave trade in 1807 despite fierce opposition. The US follows in 1808.



1800s

Slave labour continues to boom in the US (in cotton) and Brazil (coffee), both sustained by internal slave trading.

A contemporary painting of sharecroppers in the American deep south

1866

The last slave ship crosses the Atlantic, heading to Cuba.

1838

After trialling an 'apprenticeship' system — where liberated slaves worked for free for a transition period of up to six years — the British emancipate their slaves.

1886-88

Slavery ends in Cuba (1886) and, finally, Brazil (1888). **H**

1815 onwards

Royal Navy and US naval patrols seek to prevent Atlantic slave trade — but almost 3 million cross the ocean, mainly to Brazil and Cuba.

Britain's HMS *Acorn* opens fire on the slave ship *Gabriel* in 1841



NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM/BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY



An engraving showing the Saint-Domingue slave rebellion

THE BIG QUESTIONS

1 Why was it Africans who were enslaved?

Europeans developed the Atlantic slave trade, and American plantation slavery, at a time when they had turned their back on slavery at home. African slavery was encountered in the early European trading missions, but it was the shortage of labour in the Americas that sealed the Africans' fate. The swift collapse of the population of native peoples in the Americas through disease, and the relative scarcity of European labour, made the development of American settlements tenuous. Neither European free labour nor Amerindian labour (free or enslaved) was adequate to the tasks of mining precious metals or cultivating tropical and semi-tropical produce. African slavery offered a solution, not least because it had been tried with great success on the sugar plantations in the islands in the Gulf of Guinea. Thus, at a time when the idea of enslaving fellow Europeans had disappeared, settlers in the Americas found African slaves an irresistible temptation.

A range of cultural justifications were offered for the enslavement and transportation of Africans as slaves, while Europeans quickly developed the maritime skills and practices needed to transport Africans in large numbers across the Atlantic. In the process, African slavery developed not merely as a vital economic force but as a legal concept. Laws governing slave ships and colonial plantation slavery evolved, and all hinged on the concept of the slave *as a thing*. Africans were bought and sold in the same manner as other items of commerce: they were cargo on board ships and part of the property on plantations. From the first, this created obvious legal and philosophical problems. What happened to slaves when they stepped ashore in the free societies of Europe? Did European rights apply to Africans? What were the boundaries between freedom and enslavement? Such questions, in various forms, taxed slave-holding societies throughout the history of African slavery. They were only finally resolved when the abolitionist concept 'Am I not a man/woman and a brother/sister?' was conceded in law in the course of the 19th century.

2 Why did the slave trade last so long?

Over three centuries, more than 12 million Africans were removed by Atlantic slave ships. More than 11 million survived to landfall in the Americas. Why did the trade last so long? Why did such huge numbers not create viable, thriving populations that increased of their own natural accord?

Firstly, the sexual composition of the captives was important. Where the sexual balance was uneven (with more men or more children), it was difficult for a slave population to grow naturally. Equally, the ill health of Africans landing on the slave ships often militated against normal or healthy patterns of childbearing. The physical and mental traumas of enslavement and travel, and especially the impact of the slave ships,

impaired healthy reproduction, not to mention working and living conditions on the plantations. More complex still was the question of links between Africans and Europeans. In societies where slaves greatly outnumbered whites and where Africans dominated the slave force, African customs and habits persisted. Prolonged breast-feeding (common among many African women) tended to suppress the birth rate. Where female slaves had closer social links to European women (who tended to have shorter breast-feeding patterns), slave birth rates tended to be higher.

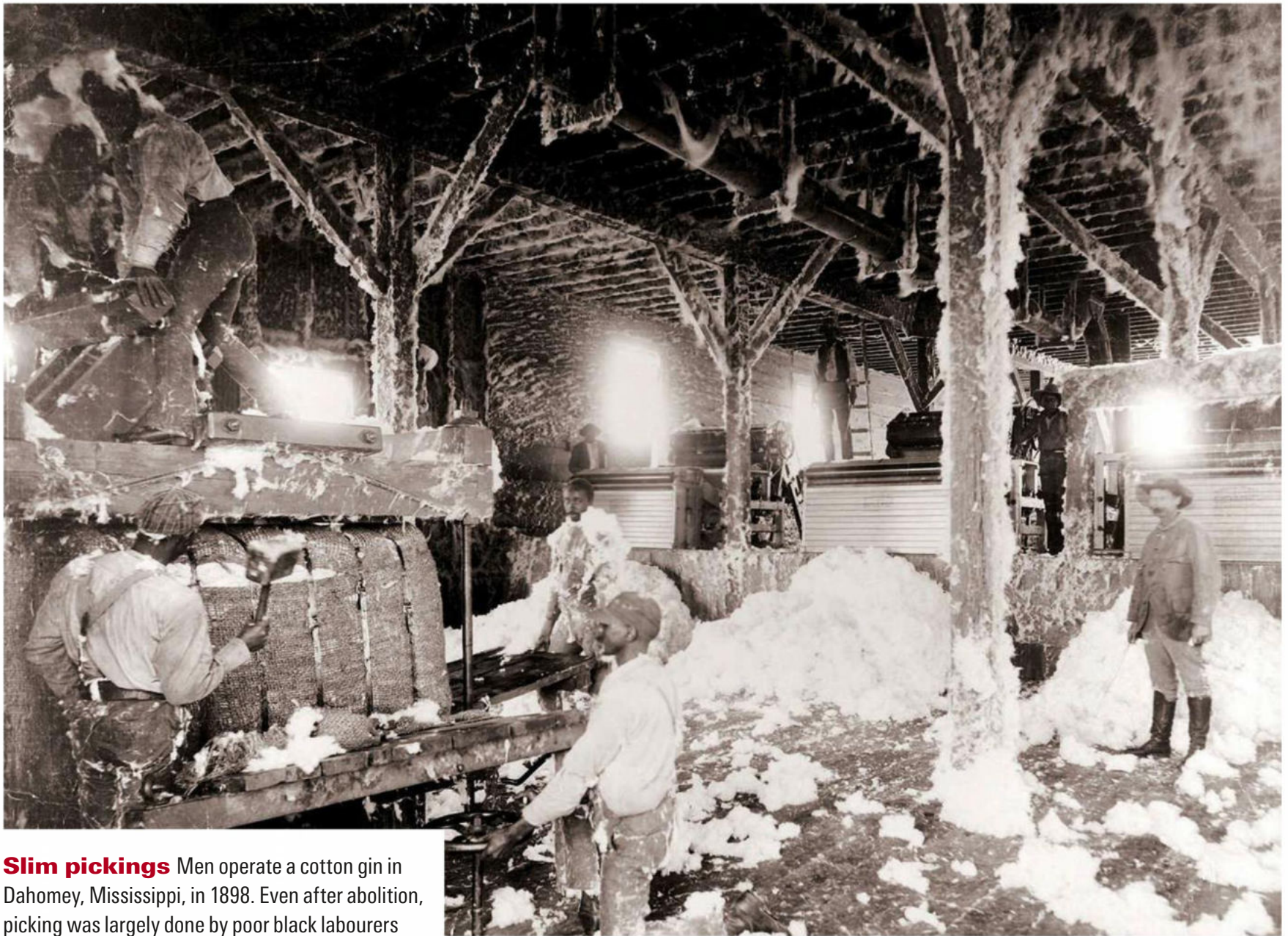
Once local-born slave women entered child-bearing years, they tended to have more children than African women. This pattern emerged in the Caribbean and in the North American colonies. One result was that the newly formed USA had a growing slave population, and no longer required slaves from Africa. However, where new frontiers and industries opened up – around coffee in Brazil and sugar in Cuba, for instance – large numbers of Africans continued to be imported from Africa. Hence the survival of the slave trade well into the 19th century.

3 Why did the west turn against slavery?

For much of its history, the Atlantic slave system had few critics. Moreover, their voices were usually drowned out by the wealth generated by successful slaving. That began to change, quickly, after the declaration of American independence in 1776. The rise of a new political and religious sensibility – part Enlightenment, part theological – prompted the rise of a widespread abolition sentiment. Though the vested interests of slave trading (merchants, traders and planters) fought a dogged rearguard action, the slaves' cause became a tide that undermined the slave system. Revolutionary and wartime violence corroded slavery. And so too did the actions of the slaves themselves. Their voices and actions, their defiance, resistance and flight, helped tip the balance. When the west became abolitionist, the most persuasive critics had been the slaves and their allies, who promoted the cause of freedom. And the most persuasive evidence was the horror stories that emerged from the bellies of the slave ships.

4 How did slavery tie into the global economy?

Much of our understanding about slavery has been defined by national boundaries (slavery in the US, in Jamaica, in Brazil, etc.) But innovative research on the Atlantic slave trade has exposed slavery as a ubiquitous, global force. For all the obvious boundaries of national interests – in colonial, trading and military affairs – slavery had global consequences. There were extensive trading routes (not unlike the old silk routes) which bound Atlantic slavery to a wider world economy. Goods from Asia found their way onto Atlantic slave ships.

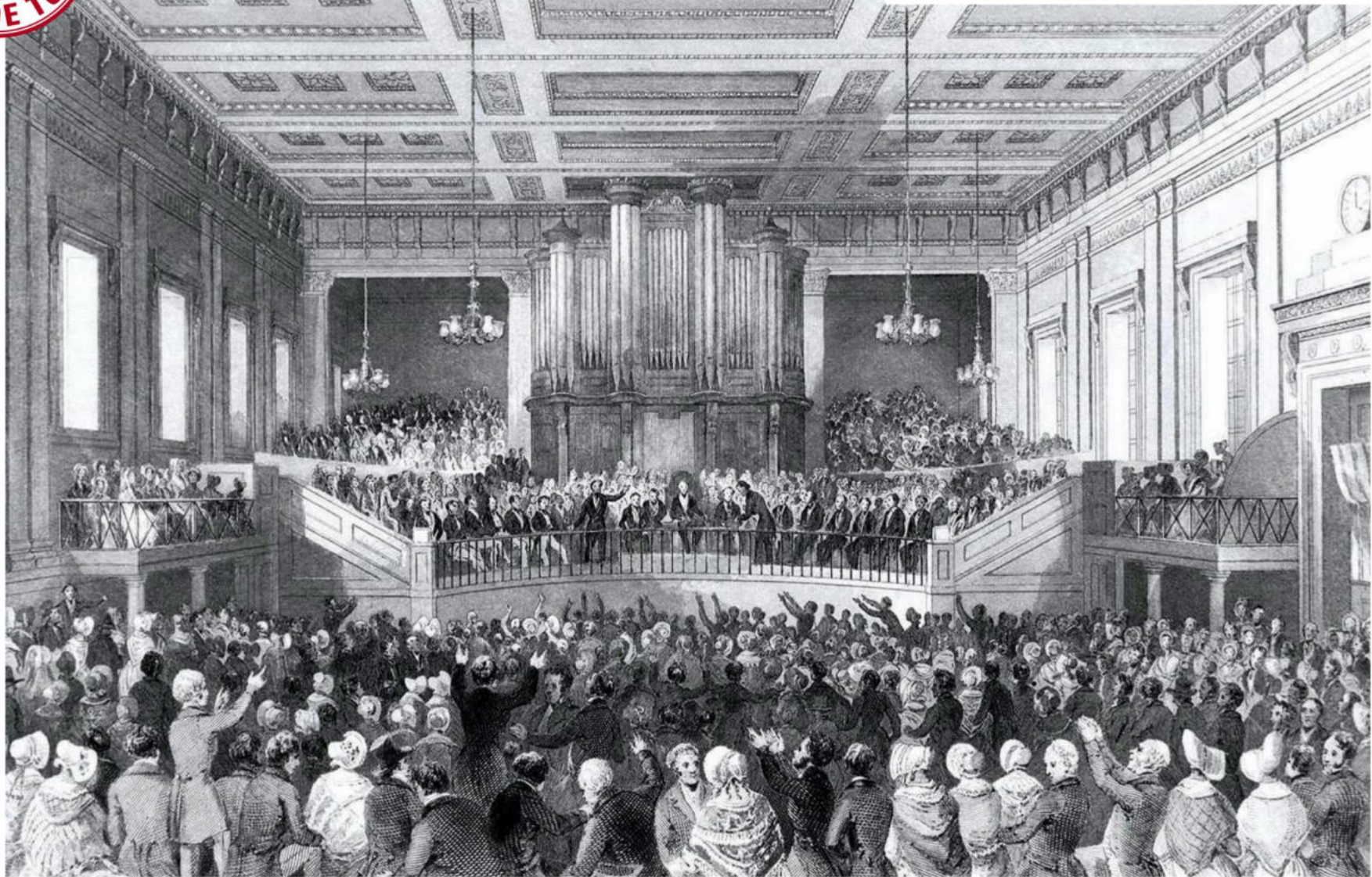


Slim pickings Men operate a cotton gin in Dahomey, Mississippi, in 1898. Even after abolition, picking was largely done by poor black labourers



Free speech UK protesters wear face masks denoting the silence of slaves during a 2017 march against forced labour and sexual exploitation

Winds of change A meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society at London's Exeter Hall in 1841. By 1888, all western states had abolished slavery



Slave-grown produce could, by the late 18th century, be found in far-flung global locations. The profits from slaving enabled western consumers to acquire luxury goods from China – a country that even used silver from the high Andes as its currency. Africans were scattered to all corners of the globe – and so too were the commodities they produced.

Although the Atlantic slave trade was physically defined by the ocean, its consequences were global, from Africa to the American frontiers – where, for example, great damage was inflicted on native peoples by slave-grown rum, which was exchanged for pelts and furs. More crucially, the importation of African slaves to the Americas helped create a platform for the remarkable material development of the Americas. The slave ships thus contributed to laying the foundations from which the modern world emerged.

5 What happened to slavery after abolition?

The west turned against slavery and the slave trade – slowly – in the 19th century. In 1800, no western state had abolished it. By 1888, it had gone. Or had it? The new imperial determination to end the practice – especially in Africa – uncovered slavery and slave trading everywhere. Western powers now used their military and diplomatic might to stop it (though doing so was often a means of strengthening their own interests). The late-century outcry about atrocities and slavery in the Congo Free State revealed how far the west had turned against slaving. Navies and diplomats united in curbing slave trading in Africa, Arabia and the sea lanes linking them. Long before 1914, abolition had, in the words of Seymour Drescher, become the “gold standard of civilisation”.

And yet slavery re-emerged in the 20th century. The rise of the Soviet Union, with its massive use of forced labour,

and especially the Nazis’ vast conquests and enslavement of millions, presented a deeply troubling development in slavery’s history. The practice had been revived, not in distant colonies but in Europe’s heartlands.

After 1945, the drive to put an end to slavery was taken over by agencies of the United Nations. Despite this, it lived on. Scholars reckon that upwards of 40 million people are in slavery today – including trafficked people, child labourers and those entangled in a raft of forms of unfree labour. Slave trafficking thrives because of dire poverty, warfare, corruption and dysfunctional government. The question remains, however: is modern trafficking the same as the Atlantic slave trade?

6 Was the slave trade a holocaust?

The Atlantic slave trade is sometimes described as a holocaust. But is this an appropriate or accurate description? No serious student can contest the enormous human damage that spread over such an enormous period of time and space. Nor do serious scholars dispute the levels of suffering and mortality involved on the pestilential slave ships. We need, however, to consider the *purpose* of the Atlantic slave trade. It aimed to secure enslaved people for the labour markets of the Americas. It was a trade that reduced its African victims to the status of chattel: objects to be bought and sold. At each point of that complex trade – in Africa, on the Atlantic coast and in the slave markets of the Americas – all sides involved hoped for profitable business. And everywhere the story was the same: the weaker and less suitable the enslaved victims, the lower their commercial value.

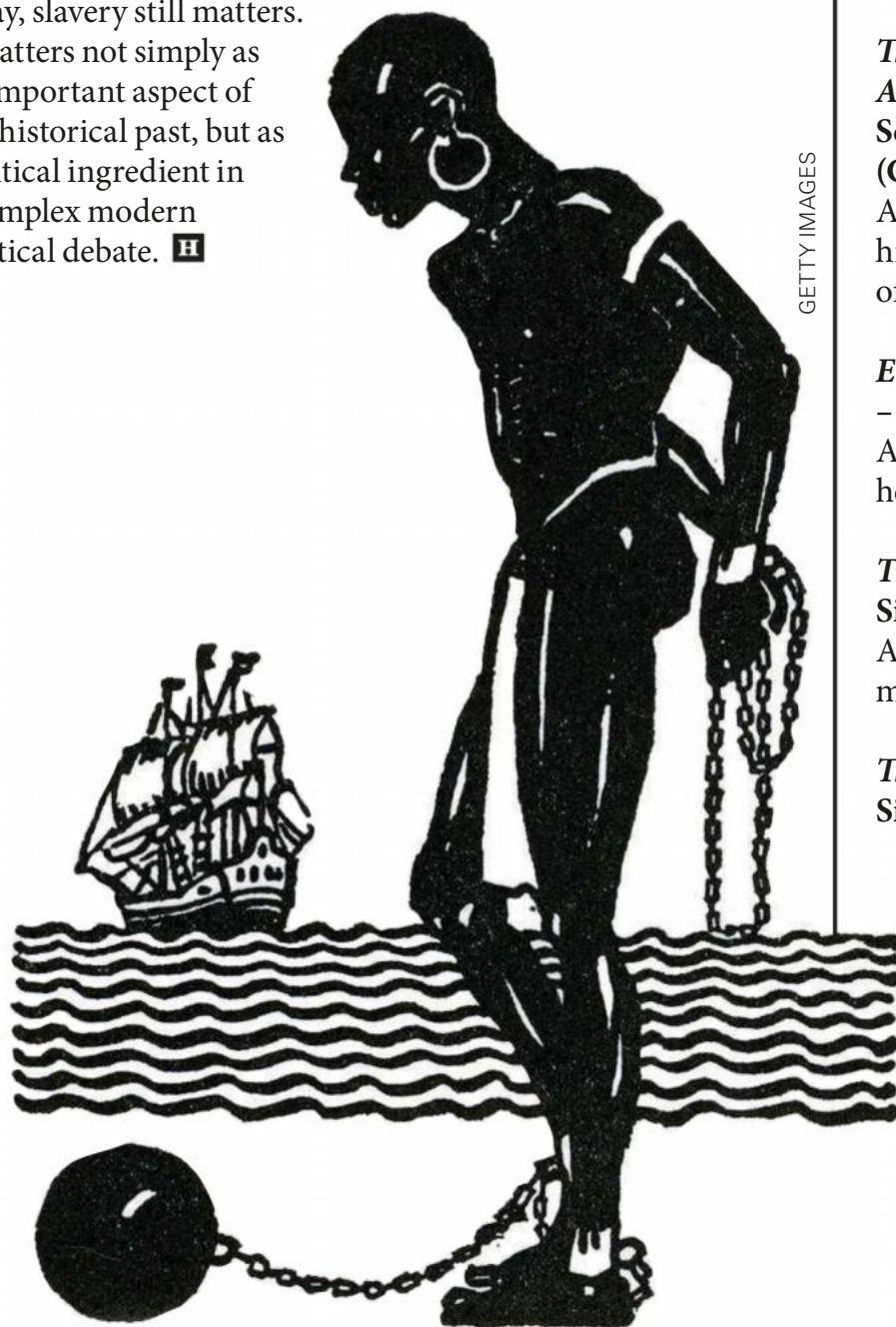
The human suffering involved – in Africa, on the coast, on the ships and later on the plantations – must not deceive us.

Capricious and institutional cruelty was commonplace. Often it was used to secure greater effort from the enslaved. But even in the harshest of shipboard or plantation regimes, commercial profit remained the aim. Though the slave trade involved cruelty and suffering on an extraordinary scale, the purpose was not to damage or destroy the slaves, but to secure the best return from them. So is 'holocaust' the best description?

7 Have reparations been made since abolition?

British slave owners shared £20m compensation for the loss of their slaves after 1833. Except for their freedom, the slaves received nothing. US slaves had been promised 40 acres and a mule, but they too got nothing. Though mentioned by some abolitionists, the question of compensation for the slaves – for their loss of liberty, and for their enforced labour from one generation to another – was not seriously considered. In recent years, however, the debate about compensation has resurfaced. The foundations were laid by the post-1945 legal and political settlement of German and Austrian debts. The Nuremberg trials and a string of legal disputes established a link between the concept of crimes against humanity and compensation. This became the basis and inspiration for contemporary campaigns in Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and the Americas for reparations for slavery. The campaign gained strength when adopted by the UN.

Today, the question has become an inescapable feature in political argument on both sides of the Atlantic. It is a debate that, inevitably, draws on historical scholarship. Historians of slavery regularly face questions about reparations: a reminder that, today, slavery still matters. It matters not simply as an important aspect of our historical past, but as a critical ingredient in a complex modern political debate. **H**



BOOKS AND WEBSITES

Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade – David Eltis and David Richardson (Yale University Press, 2010)

Comprehensive, detailed and clear, this is an invaluable offshoot from *slavevoyages.org*, an indispensable online scholarly archive and interpretation of the slave trade.

Legacies of British Slave-Ownership

This UCL-based project analyses British slave compensation records, exposing the pervasive influence and importance of slaving in British life.

ucl.ac.uk/lbs

The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas – David Eltis (Cambridge University Press, 2000)

The best single-volume study of the topic available.

Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery – Seymour Drescher (Cambridge UP, 2009)

A masterly exposition of the rise and fall – and survival – of slavery worldwide.

Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World – David Brion Davis (Oxford UP, 2006)

By the pre-eminent historian of anti-slavery, this deserves to be read alongside Drescher.

The Cambridge World History of Slavery: Volume 4, AD 1804–AD 2016 – David Eltis, Stanley Engerman, Seymour Drescher and David Richardson, eds (Cambridge UP, 2017)

An invaluable collection of essays by the most eminent historians in the field, providing a comprehensive study of Atlantic slavery's demise.

Empire of Cotton: A New History of Global Capitalism – Sven Beckert (Penguin, 2014)

A brilliant study of cotton, which locates slavery at the heart of the rise of industrial capitalism.

Trafficking in Human Beings: Modern Slavery – Silvia Scarpa (Oxford UP, 2008)

An account of the legal and diplomatic origins of modern anti-slavery.

The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition – Manisha Sinha (Yale UP, 2016)

An important revisionary account that locates US abolition in its hemispheric setting.

Freedom: The Overthrow of the Slave Empires – James Walvin (Robinson, 2019)

My own study places the slaves centre-stage in the ending of slavery.



A group of African-Americans aboard the USS *Vermont*, 1860s. The US navy employed thousands of freed slaves during the American Civil War

“The rise of a new political and religious sensibility corroded slavery. But so too did the actions of the slaves themselves. Their voices and defiance, their resistance and flight helped tip the balance”

